SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

勝木 光

4

Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

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Baby Steps ベイビーステップ 4

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SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

勝木光（かつきひかる）

Baby Steps 4

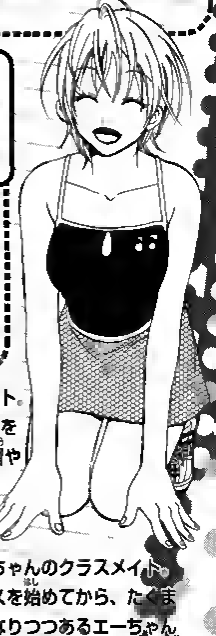
ベイビーステップ

Baby Steps 人物紹介

「ベイビーステップ」

エーちゃん 丸尾栄一郎

STC所属。几帳面でマジメな優等生。気楽な気持ちで始めたテニスに、どっぷりハマる。地道な練習をコツコツ続け、着々とレベルアップ中!! 練習や試合内容をすべて書き込んだ「エーちゃんノート」を武器に奮戦中!!



ナツ 鷹崎奈津

STC所属。

エーちゃんと同じ高校に通い、学年一かわいいと評判。性格はテキトーで大雑把だが、テニスに向ける情熱は人一倍!! マジメに頑張るエーちゃんを心から応援している。

影山

エーちゃんのクラスメイト。几帳面すぎるエーちゃんをからかいながらも、テニスの練習や試合に付き合うイイ奴。

佐々木姫子

エーちゃんのクラスメイト。テニスを始めてから、たくましくなりつつあるエーちゃんに興味津々!?

神奈川ジュニアテニスサーキットスタート!!

去年の1回戦敗退の悔しさを胸に、1年間練習を重ねてきたエーちゃん。

リベンジの刻来る!!

神奈川六天王

辻川 誠

第1シード

STC所属。恵まれた身体能力と技術で神奈川の頂点に君臨。プレースタイルはサーブ＆ボレー。文句を言いながらも、エーちゃんのガッツは認めている。実は、エーちゃんの存在がいい刺激に!?

荒谷 翔

第2シード

GITC所属。スプリンターばりの脚力と強靭な上半身を持つ、恐るべきパワーファイター。

大林 晃

第4シード

梅田TC所属ながら、湘南工業学院テニス部副主将。プレースタイルはサーブ＆ボレー。

岩佐徳永

第3シード

ファーサイドTA所属。あらゆるショットを器用にこなすオールラウンダー。

宮川卓也

第5シード

江川 [illegible]

第6シード

STC所属。エーちゃんを"アニキ"と慕い、集めた情報を惜しげなく伝達。STCではタクマに続くNo.3。

宮川T.A.所属。武器は180cmの長身から繰り出される[illegible]

3回戦 ただいま対戦中!!

宮川 VS

エーちゃん

見つけた‥、俺の「勝てる」可能性!!

Baby Steps

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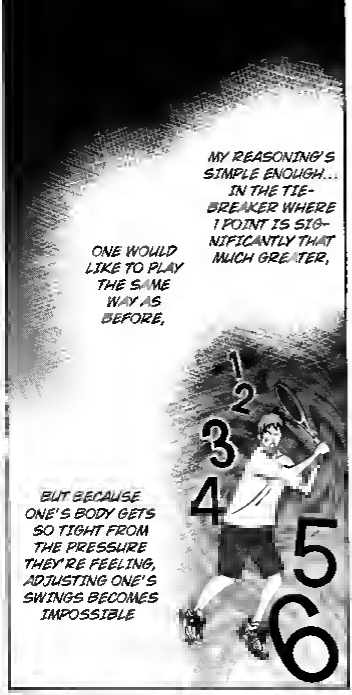
【掲載：2006年発行　週刊少年マガジン第20号～第30号】

★この物語はフィクションであり、実在の人物、団体、出来事などとは一切関係ありません。

to Giant Strides

A SET IN WHICH YOU AIM TO BE THE FIRST TO GET 7 POINTS WITHIN TWO SERVE CHANGES.
IT'S THE TIE-BREAKER...
6-6 TIE-BREAKER
IT WAS ONLY ME RUNNING AWAY FROM LOSSES.
6
6
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO BREAK DOWN A SINGLE ONE OF MIYAGAWA'S SERVES SO FAR,
AT LONG LAST, WE TAKE A GIANT STEP INTO THE TIE-BREAKING SET!
FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER,
BUT NOW,
I FEEL LIKE I MIGHT WIN THIS!
CHAPTER 24: A PROBABILITY


MY REASONING'S SIMPLE ENOUGH... IN THE TIE-BREAKER WHERE 1 POINT IS SIGNIFICANTLY THAT MUCH GREATER,
ONE WOULD LIKE TO PLAY THE SAME WAY AS BEFORE,
BUT BECAUSE ONE'S BODY GETS SO TIGHT FROM THE PRESSURE THEY'RE FEELING, ADJUSTING ONE'S SWINGS BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE
1
2
3
4
5
6

THAT WAS A SURPRISE
TO THINK HE COULD HIDE SOMETHING LIKE NOT HAVING A WINNING SHOT FOR SO LONG.

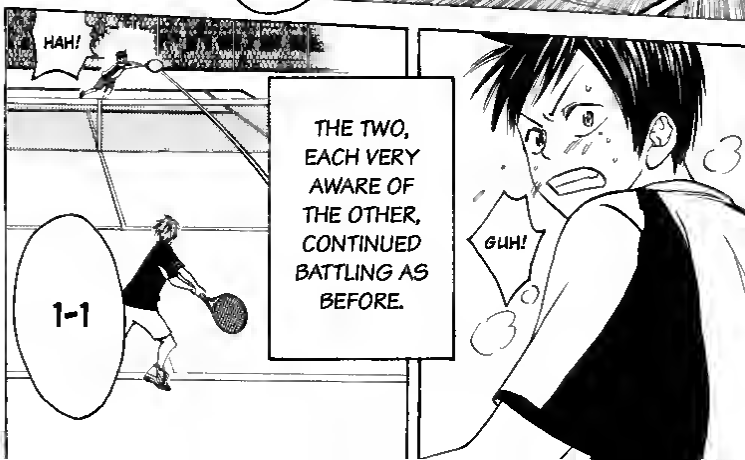
I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SEE HIM AS A RIVAL NOW.

BUT IN THIS TIEBREAKER, I'M THE ONE WITH AN ADVANTAGE

I CAN DO NOTHING BUT PLAY IN THE STYLE I HAVE BEEN UP UNTIL NOW
BUT SINCE I'M ALWAYS MAKING A FULL SWING,
I DON'T HAVE PROBLEMS WITH SWING ADJUSTMENTS.

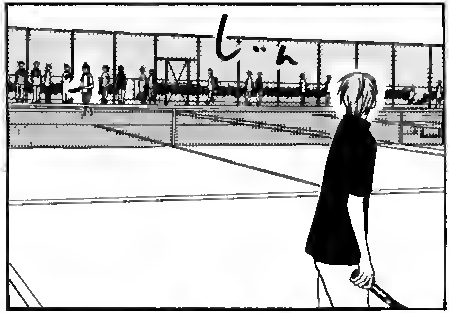
I CAN WIN THIS...
WELL, EVEN SAYING THAT, IT'S STILL A POSSIBILITY.
DON'T RUSH IT!
IF I BREAK MY FLOW NOW, THIS WILL ALL HAVE BEEN A COMPLETE WASTE!
IF THAT TRULY IS A "POSSIBILITY FOR WINNING"...
THEN KEEPING MY PACE IS AS IMPORTANT AS EVER!
THIS IS WHAT NAC-CHAN WAS TELLING ME ABOUT.
BEING NERVOUS IS PROOF THAT YOU REALLY WANT TO WIN THAT'S GOOD TO HOPE FOR IN A MATCH, SO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO YOUR OPPONENT THAN YOURSELF TO DO IT!
GO FOR IT!
PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR OPPONENT!

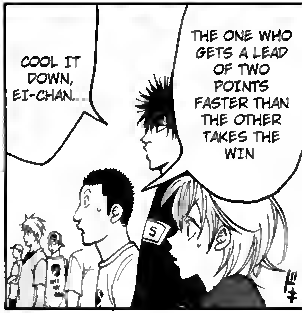
1-0, MIYAGAWA.


HAH!
1-1
THE TWO, EACH VERY AWARE OF THE OTHER, CONTINUED BATTLING AS BEFORE.
GUH!

2-1, MARUO.
2-2
3-2, MIYAGAWA.
THE MATCH BASICALLY HAD BOTH PLAYERS DEFENDING THEIR KEEPS
THE BATTLE KEPT UNFOLDING AS EACH FIGHTER KEPT ON AS ALWAYS, WITH MIYAGAWA FIGHTING CALMLY AND EICHIKOU CONTINUING DESPERATELY.
3-3
4-3, MARUO.
4-4
5-4, MIYAGAWA.
5-5
AND THEN, THE MATCH CAME DOWN TO THE VERY LAST, ESSENTIAL POINT

ザワ
ザワ
SO, THE SCORE HAS FINALLY HIT 5-5, HUH...
WHOEVER MAKES THIS LAST POINT WILL GET THE MATCH POINT.

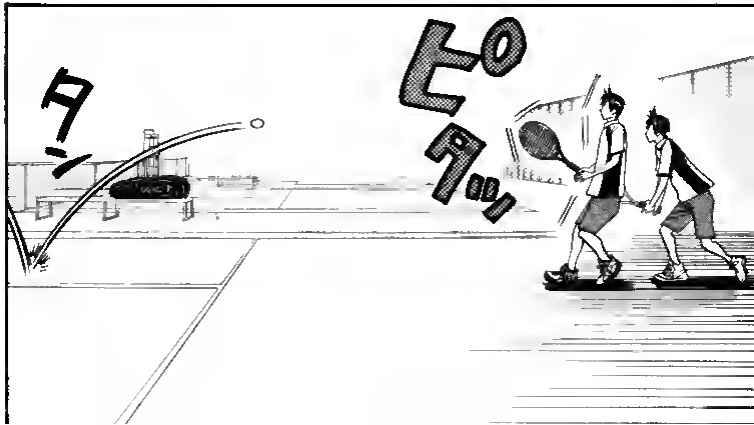

じゃん


COOL IT DOWN, EI-CHAN...
THE ONE WHO GETS A LEAD OF TWO POINTS FASTER THAN THE OTHER TAKES THE WIN

MIYAGAWA REMAINS AS CALM AS EVER, AND STAYS CONSCIOUS OF HOW HIS GAME HAS BEEN PLAYED SO FAR.
THE MORE IMPORTANT THE POINTS GET.
THE MORE I'VE GOT THE ADVANTAGE
FILA

ドクン ドクン ドクン
EICHIROU ISN'T KEEPING HIS COOL, SO HIS GAME NOW WILL BE A BIT DIFFERENT FROM BEFORE.
C- CALM DOWN... KEEP IT COOL!
THIS IS WHAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!
ALTHOUGH THIS BATTLE HEAVILY FAVORS MIYAGAWA-KUN
AND ALTHOUGH THE LONGER THE MATCH GOES ON, THE MORE MY WEAKNESSES WILL SHOW,
ぎゅっ
BUT THIS IS ONLY GOING TO BE SETTLED ONCE!
TIME TO GO FOR IT!
TO KEEP PLAYING AS I WAS, I HAVE TO CONTINUE MOVING UP COURT.

HE'S COMING FORWARD AGAIN! I'M GOING TO SINK IT DOWN!
AND THAT WAS ALL FOR THIS MOMENT!



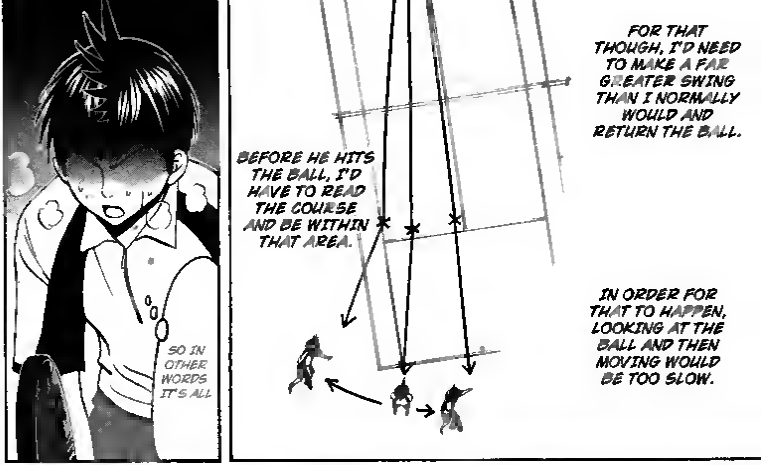
HE DIDN'T SHIFT FORWARD?!
AH.
!?
しまった!! 作戦が!!
出てない!! 出たフリ!?
ポーチ!! ただのボレーン!!
CRAP!

GUH!
HAH!
GOT TO HIT THIS ONE HARD...
GOT HIM OFF-BALANCE!
AND WITH EXACT...
HAH!
CONTROL!

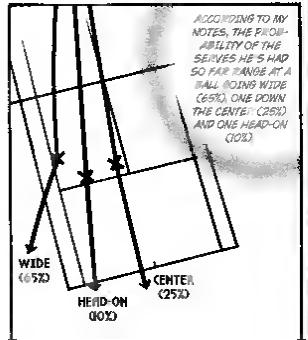
6-5. MARUO TAKES THE LEAD.
SKINS
WAS THAT A SNEAK ATTACK?!
MIYAGAWA GOT A MATCH POINT SCORED ON HIM!
ALL RIIGHT!
THANK YOU SO MUCH, TAKUMA-SAN!

YOU SERIOUS?!
MIYAGAWA'S LOSING TO NOTEBOOK KID?!
AWESOME, GREAT! YOU'RE AMAZING, EI-CHAN!
HE SHOWED A SKILL HE'D STOLEN AGAIN
IT WAS MINE, TOO.
THIS IS CRAZY! ANIKI'S REALLY STRONG!
HEY... WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT JUST YET.
WITHIN A SINGLE POINT, THE FLOW OF THE TIEBREAKER WILL CHANGE
TAKE A LOOK AT MIYAGAWA'S FACE
HE'S NOT DOUBTING HIS VICTORY AT ALL.
MIYAGAWA WILL BE MAKING 2 SERVES,
AND IF HE CONTINUES ON LIKE HE NORMALLY DOES,
MARUO-KUN WILL BE THE ONE BEING SCORED ON THIS TIME.

I GOT PAST THE FIRST BARRIER!
I HAVE YET TO TAKE THE LEAD OVER MIYAGAWA-KUN'S SERVES.
BUT THIS NEXT ONE'S GOING TO BE REALLY TOUGH!
I COULDN'T BREAK HIS SERVE,
BUT THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT I CAN MAKE A POINT WITH IT.
BUT IF I CAN USE THE EXTENT OF MY STRENGTH AND SLAM THE BALL BACK STRONGLY, I COULD TAKE CONTROL AND GET A POINT!
BUT EARLIER, THERE WAS ONLY ONE THOUGHT ON MY MIND:
I COULD WIN THIS.

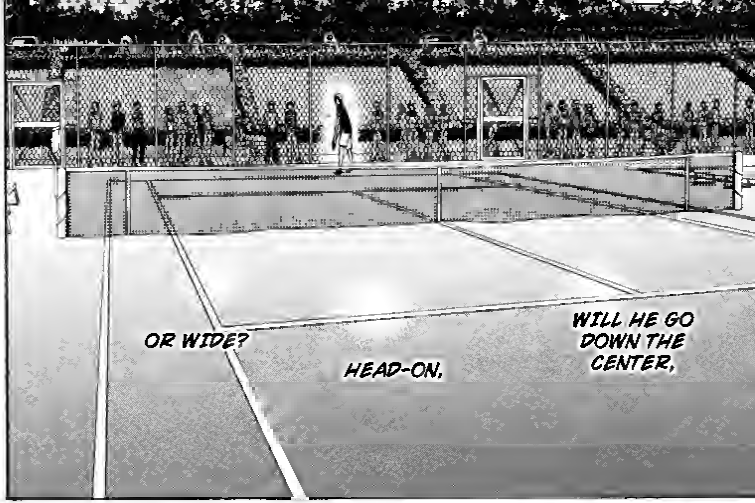

SO IN OTHER WORDS IT'S ALL
BEFORE HE HITS THE BALL, I'D HAVE TO READ THE COURSE AND BE WITHIN THAT AREA.
FOR THAT THOUGH, I'D NEED TO MAKE A FAR GREATER SWING THAN I NORMALLY WOULD AND RETURN THE BALL.
IN ORDER FOR THAT TO HAPPEN, LOOKING AT THE BALL AND THEN MOVING WOULD BE TOO SLOW.

THOUGH I DON'T REALLY WANT TO...
I'D HAVE TO BET ON SOMETHING THAT ISN'T INDISPUTABLE...

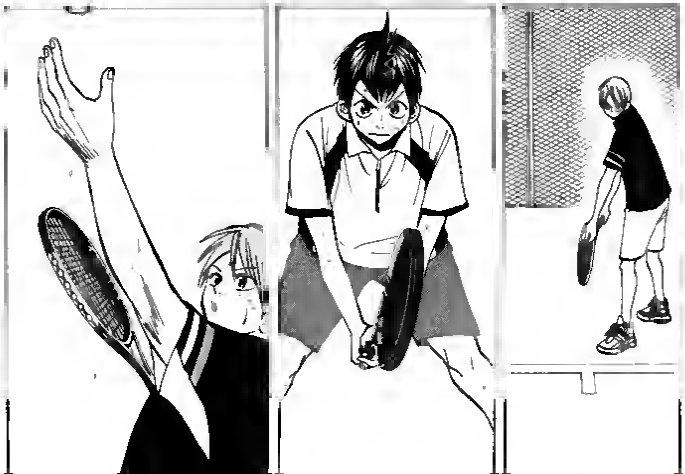

ACCORDING TO MY NOTES, THE PROBABILITY OF THE SERVES HE'S HAD SO FAR RANGE AT A BALL GOING WIDE (65%), ONE DOWN THE CENTER (25%) AND ONE HEAD-ON (10%).
WIDE (65%)
HEAD-ON (10%)
CENTER (25%)

INTUITION.
ドキドキ

IF I'M NOT, IT WILL BE AN ACE.
IF I'M IN THE RIGHT PLACE, I CAN TAKE CONTROL OF THE MATCH.
BUT IF I DON'T TAKE THIS RISK, I CAN'T TAKE CONTROL OF THE MATCH, EITHER.
SO IF I MISS THIS ONE BALL, I DOUBT ANOTHER SURPRISE ATTACK WILL WORK, AND MY CHANCES OF WINNING WILL BE AS GOOD AS GONE!
THAT'S JUST THE KIND OF OPPONENT MIYAGAWA IS.
I HAVE TO DO IT, OR I WON'T BE ABLE TO BEAT HIM.

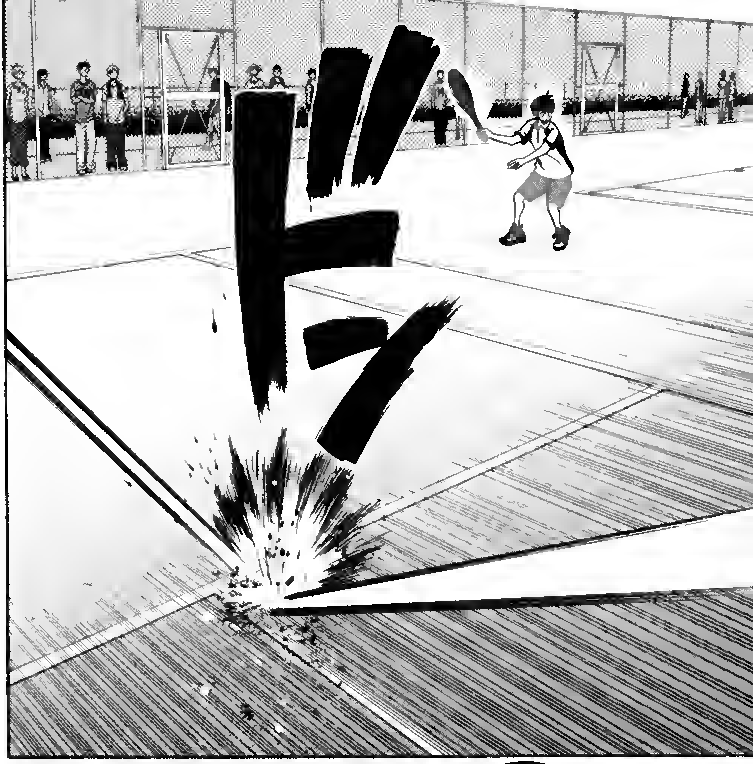

WILL HE GO DOWN THE CENTER,
HEAD-ON,
OR WIDE?

SKINS



EH...?
SKINS
HE'S GOING WIDE!
WH-
EI-CHAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
SKINS

WH-?!
SKINS
AU
UP THE CENTER,
HEAD-ON,
OR GOING WIDE?
IF I'M RIGHT, THIS IS MY CHANCE!
IF I'M WRONG...
#25: VICTORY OR DEFEAT


トン

I...
FILA
6-6
SKINS

I-I MISSED IT~~~~~~~~~~!!

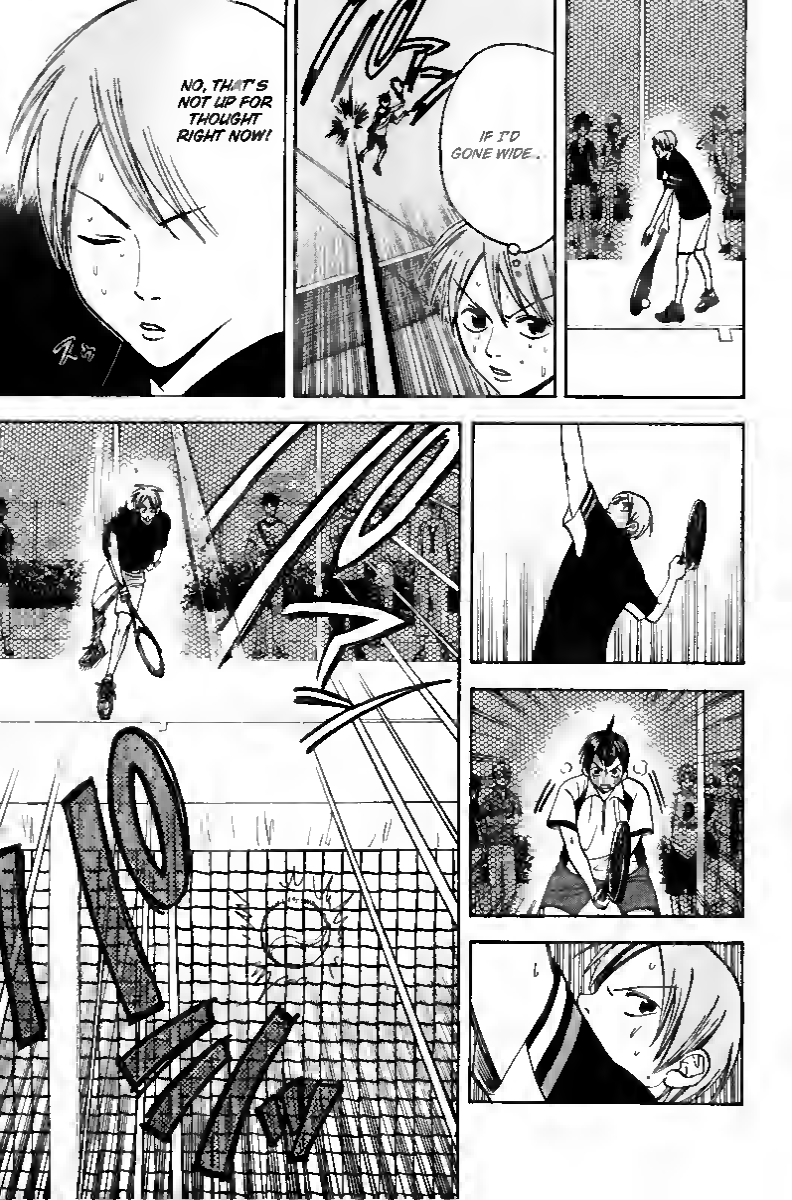
WHOA, WHOA, WHAT'D HE JUST DO?
SO HE BET ON A WIDE SO HE COULD RETURN THE BALL WITH A FULL SWING?!
WHAAAT?! ISN'T THAT A LITTLE TOO MUCH?!
I THOUGHT HE WAS SOME SIMPLE KID.

C-CALM DOWN...THAT WAS A RISKY ATTACK...
I RELIED ON MY INTUITION, THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT...
BUT THIS IS SERIOUSLY BAD...
MIYAGAWA HAS ANOTHER SERVE, AND I CAN'T SURPRISE HIM ANYMORE...
AND I HAVEN'T HAD A PLAN SINCE THEN EITHER...
MY ONLY CHANCE OF WINNING WENT OUT THE WINDOW...
I'M AT A SERIOUS DISADVANTAGE NOW

I NEED TWO MORE POINTS BEFORE I CAN CORNER HIM.
WAIT, NO... IT'S STILL 6-6.
....

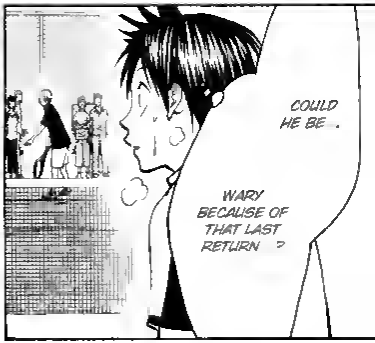
I MAY NOT HAVE AN ADVANTAGE, BUT WHATEVER I CAN DO, I WILL DO TO THE VERY END!
NO, EVEN IF IT'S ME, I WILL DRIVE HIM BACK WITH TWO MORE.

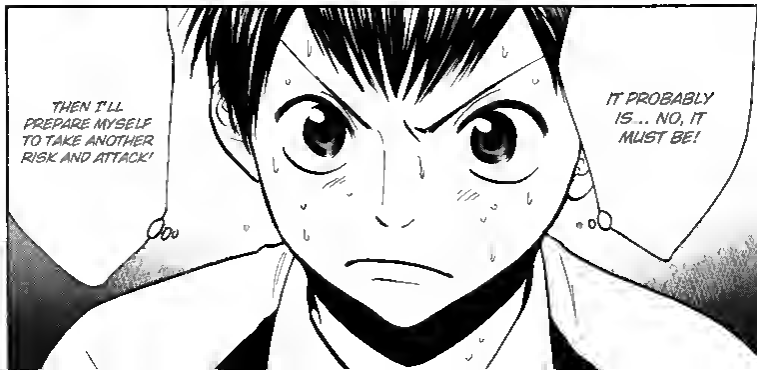
I WONDER...
IT WASN'T REALLY A BAD BET.
EH?
AWWW, AND HE'D FINALLY GOTTEN HIS CHANCE, TOO!
E-CHAN.


NO, THAT'S NOT UP FOR THOUGHT RIGHT NOW!
IF I'D GONE WIDE..

!
16
ざわっ
OH?! HE MISSED THAT BY A MILE!
?

IS THIS THE RESULT OF THAT RISK I TOOK?
SO, EVEN MY MISSING THE BALL HAD MEANING TO IT?


COULD HE BE .
WARY BECAUSE OF THAT LAST RETURN ?

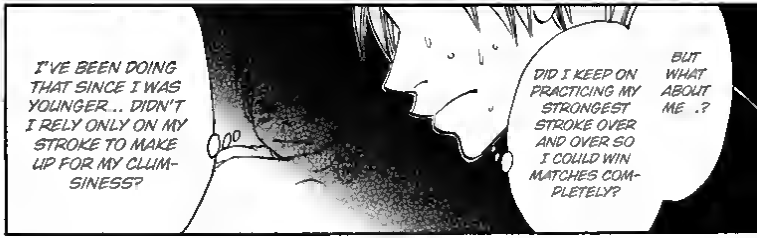

THEN I'LL PREPARE MYSELF TO TAKE ANOTHER RISK AND ATTACK!
IT PROBABLY IS .. NO, IT MUST BE!

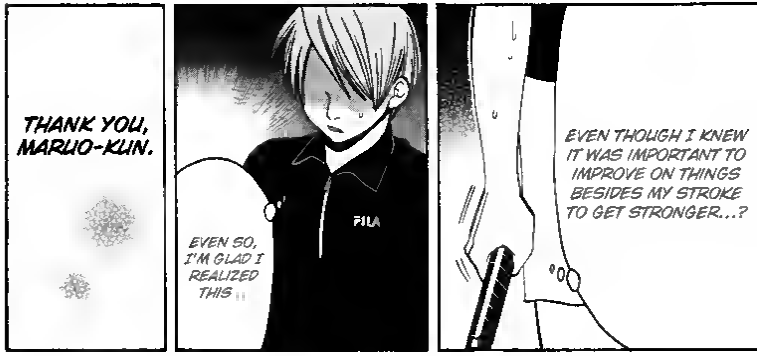
TAKE HIS NEXT, NOW GENTLER, SERVE AND...
STRIKE!

DOUBLE FAULT, 7-6! MARUO LEADS!
FAULT!
!
MARUO GOT ANOTHER MATCH POINT?!
IS THAT REALLY THE HIGHLY EXPERIENCED MIYAGAWA?!
HE WASTED THAT!

I JUST REALIZED
WHY THIS MATCH HAS BEEN SO HARD.
AND THAT'S WHY I PAID CLOSE ATTENTION TO HIM AND CONTINUED THE GAMES UP TO THE GAME OF 3-4, AND I WAS CERTAIN I'D BEEN ON GUARD IN THE TIEBREAKER, TOO.
I'D PLANNED ON UNDERSTANDING MARUO-KUN'S STRENGTH,
MY BIGGEST MISTAKE HERE WAS BEING ON MY GUARD AND TRYING FOR AN ABSOLUTE WIN
THAT WAS PUTTING ME, MYSELF, OFF-GUARD
IN A MANNER COMPLETELY UNLIKE HIM, HE ATTACKED BACK AT ME AGGRESSIVELY.
BUT EVERY TIME, MARUO-KUN UNEXPECTEDLY MOVED TO A VITAL PLACE AND COUNTERATTACKED ME.

HE'S TAKING RISKS SO HE CAN WIN.
MARUO-KUN DECIDED TO CHANGE HIMSELF IN THIS GAME.


I'VE BEEN DOING THAT SINCE I WAS YOUNGER.. DIDN'T I RELY ONLY ON MY STROKE TO MAKE UP FOR MY CLUMSINESS?
DID I KEEP ON PRACTICING MY STRONGEST STROKE OVER AND OVER SO I COULD WIN MATCHES COMPLETELY?
BUT WHAT ABOUT ME .?

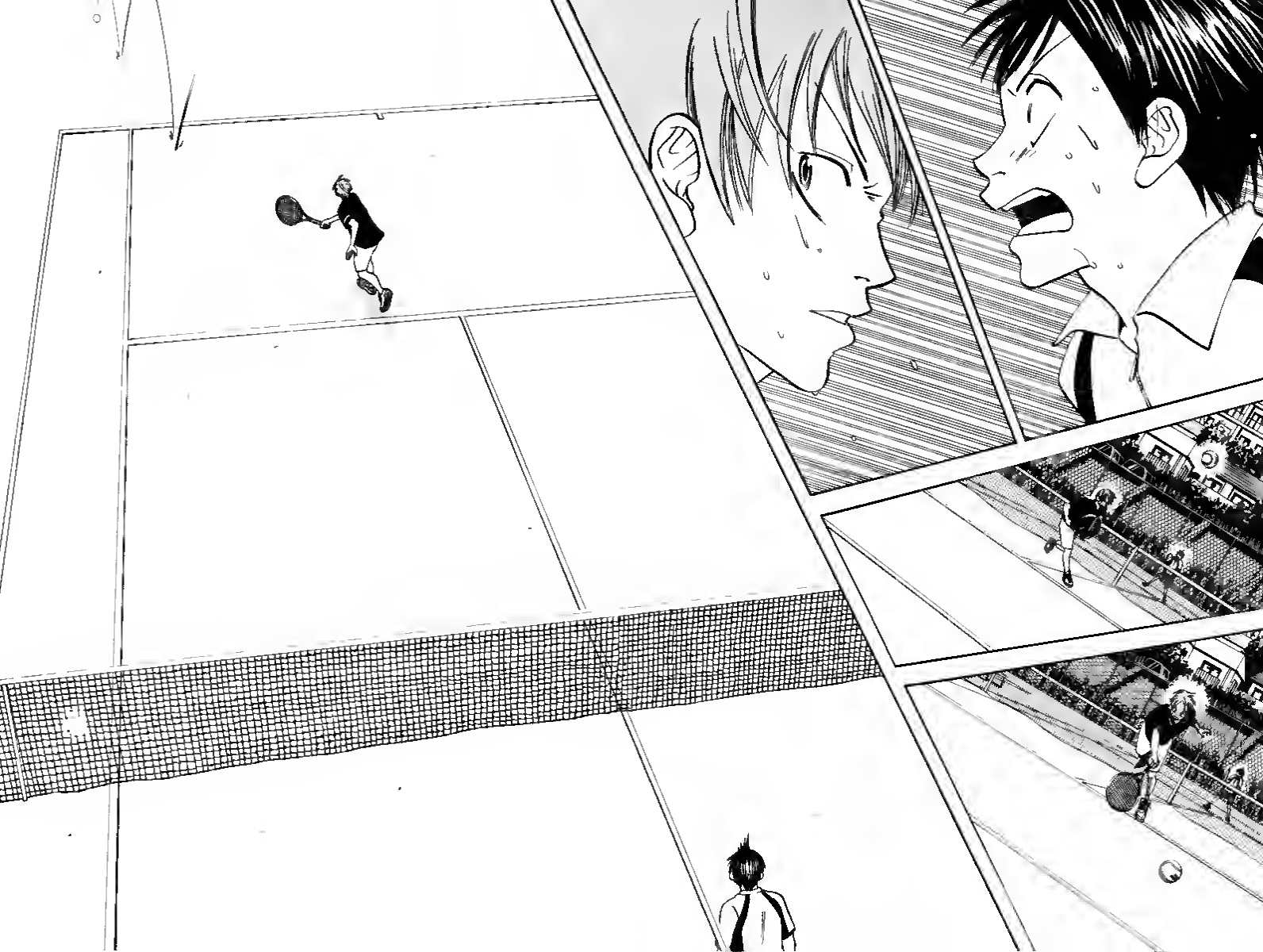

THANK YOU, MARUO-KUN.
EVEN SO, I'M GLAD I REALIZED THIS !!
FILA
EVEN THOUGH I KNEW IT WAS IMPORTANT TO IMPROVE ON THINGS BESIDES MY STROKE TO GET STRONGER...?

THREE MORE POINTS TO WIN.
I'LL TAKE YOU ON WITH ALL I'VE GOT.
I KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO DO,
FOR THIS MATCH.
I WAS IN TROUBLE BEFORE, BUT NOW I'VE GOT A REALLY GOOD CHANCE!
ANOTHER MATCH POINT...
BUT IT'S MY TURN TO SERVE THIS TIME!

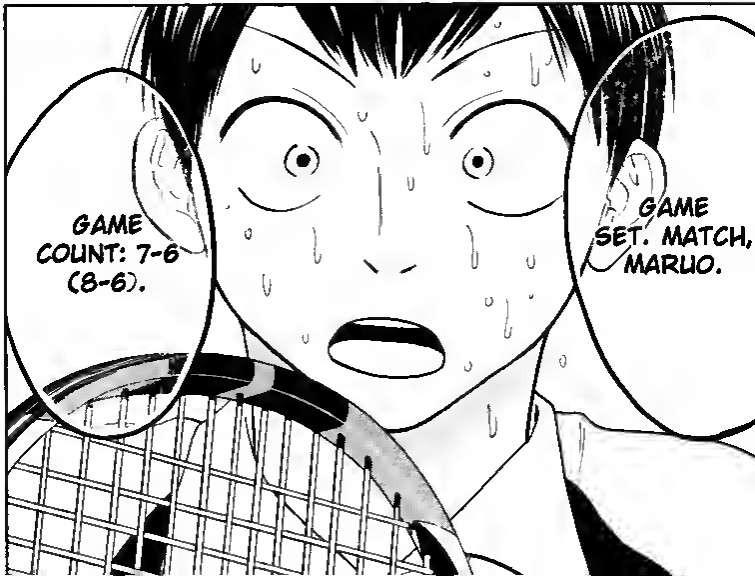
I'LL TAKE A RISK AND GO FOR AN ATTACK!
I CAN'T WIN BY ONLY COVERING THE COURT AND CONTROLLING THE BALL!
EVEN IF I WAIT FOR ONE, I WON'T GET A POINT OFF OF MIYAGAWA-KUN.
IT'S UP TO ME TO TAKE THAT RISK AND GET A POINT FOR THE FIRST TIME!
IF I REALLY WANT TO WIN THIS...
I'VE GOT TO ATTACK!

HAH!
GUH!
CR-CRAP!!
A STRONG FLAT?!

WHAT?! MIYAGAWA'S MOVING UP?!
IS HE SERIOUS?!



G-


GAME COUNT: 7-6 (8-6).
GAME SET. MATCH, MARUO.

トン
トン
#26: FOREBODING

THE FIFTH SEED MIYAGAWA'S OUT!
NO WAY!
GAME COUNT: 7-6 (8-6).
GAME SET. MATCH, MARUO!

JUST WHO IS THAT MARUO EIICHIROU GUY?!
YOU SERIOUS?! MIYAGAWA'S THE ONE WHO WAS DICTATING THE ENTIRE GAME!

NO WAY!
SKINS
SO AWESOME! EI-CHAN WON THE MATCH!

GOOD GAME.
AH!

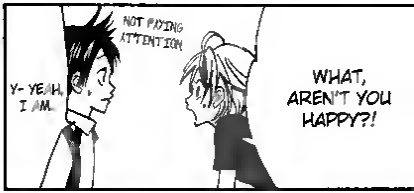
I FAILED MYSELF.
HUH?
!?
I HADN'T THOUGHT I'D WIN, EITHER...
WELL, NOT REALLY...
I DIDN'T THINK I'D EVER LOSE TO YOU.
FILA

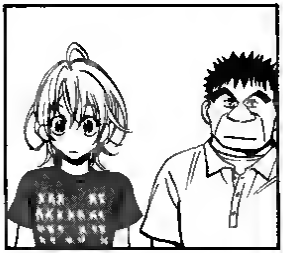
I SHOULD'VE JUST HIT THE BALL OUT WITHOUT THINKING SO MUCH ABOUT IT FROM THE START...
UHHH!
THAT'S NOT FUNNY.
I KNEW IT...
I'D PLANNED TO WATCH YOU FOR THE FIRST HALF, AND FOLLOW UP ON YOUR WEAKNESSES...
SO THERE WASN'T REALLY A POINT IN PAYING ATTENTION TO THEM.
...
BUT ALL OF YOUR STRONG AND WEAK SHOTS ARE PRETTY MUCH AVERAGE.
FILA

BUT, YOU KNOW, IT WAS REALLY FUN PLAYING.
LET'S GO AT IT AGAIN SOMETIME.
ぼー…
……
ANIKI!
EI-CHAN!

I JUST... DON'T REALLY GET IT YET.

I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU EVERY DAY FOR THE PAST YEAR, AND AM JUST SO HAPPY FOR YOU!
GOOD JOB!
YOU GOT WHAT YOU WANTED AND WON A SEEDED POSITION!


NOT PAYING ATTENTION
Y- YEAH, I AM.
WHAT, AREN'T YOU HAPPY?!



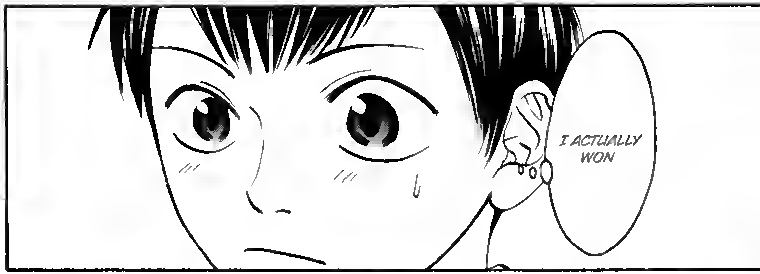
I'M HAPPY, BUT IF THAT HADN'T HAPPENED, I PROBABLY WOULD'VE LOST.
THAT LAST POINT WAS FROM THE BALL HITTING MY RACKET FRAME BY LUCK, AND LUCKILY SCORING.
NOT TO MENTION THAT EVEN BEFORE THAT, MIYAGAWA FOUGHT AGAINST ME CAUTIOUSLY, WHICH WAS A GOOD THING.

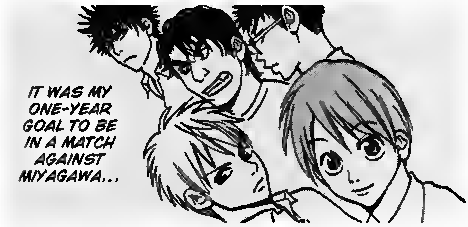
DIDN'T I SAY IT WAS ALL LUCK AND ABILITY?
THAT'S ALL YOU, NATSU!

THE FACT THAT MIYAGAWA DIDN'T AIM FOR THE SIDE BUT TOWARDS YOU IS PROOF HE WAS UNDER PRESSURE.
IT'S BECAUSE HE KNEW YOUR TENNIS STYLE FROM THE FIRST HALF THAT HE ENDED UP BEING CAUTIOUS.
A PLAYER DOESN'T HAVE TO QUESTION IT.
YOU WERE JUST LUCKY, AND THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT.
...
THERE, SEE? THEY'RE CALLING FOR YOU.
AH... YES SIR. I'LL HEAD OVER THERE!
COULD THE PLAYER FROM COURT THREE PLEASE TAKE THE BALL TO THE MAIN OFFICE?
I WONDER IF EI-CHAN REALLY UNDERSTANDS HOW UNEXPECTED THIS IS...

YOU KNOW MARUO FROM STC?
NAH, NEVER HEARD OF HIM.
...

!
HEY, SEEMS LIKE THE FIFTH SEED MIYAGAWA LOST TO SOMEONE UNSEEDED!
YOU SERIOUS? WHO WAS IT?


I ACTUALLY WON


IT WAS MY ONE-YEAR GOAL TO BE IN A MATCH AGAINST MIYAGAWA...

#4

WHETHER I CAN DO IT OR NOT, THEN I'LL REVIEW IT AFTERWARDS.
WELL, FOR THE MOMENT I WILL MAX OUT MY SCHEDULE FOR THIS

HMM, I LOST THREE MATCHES TODAY.
I CAN'T DO ANYMORE THAN I ALREADY AM
IT WAS FUN.
I WAS TOLD MY EYES ARE GOOD
I FELT REALLY GOOD ABOUT THAT
I LOST
AND I'M FRUSTRATED
I WASN'T A MATCH FOR HIM AT ALL.
IT WAS REALLY FUN PLAYING WITH YOU
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WHEN YOU'RE HAVING THE MOST FUN?

NO.29 KAWATANI-SAN AND NO.30 ONOZUKA-SAN, PLEASE MAKE YOUR WAY TO COURT EIGHT.
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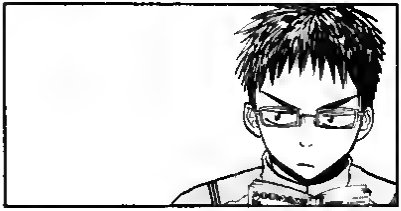
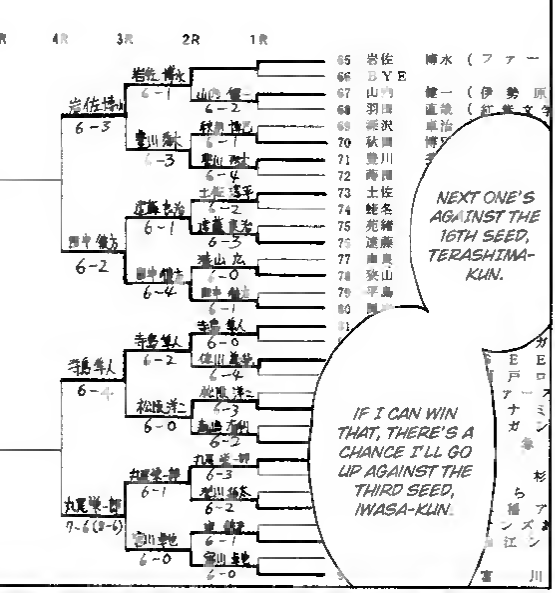
I AM NO.89 MARUO EIICHIROU FROM COURT THREE! THE GAME FINISHED WITH A 7-6 (8-6) SCORE!

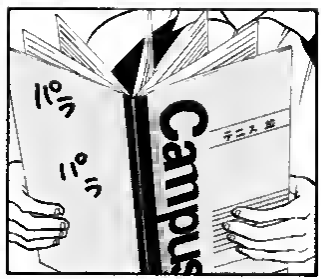


ALL RIGHT THEN. A JOB WELL DONE.

THE GAMES ARE MOVING ALONG FAIRLY SLOWLY TODAY.
YOUR NEXT MATCH WILL BE TOMORROW.
AH, I SEE.


NEXT ONE'S AGAINST THE 16TH SEED, TERASHIMA-KUN.
IF I CAN WIN THAT, THERE'S A CHANCE I'LL GO UP AGAINST THE THIRD SEED, IWASA-KUN.
THE NEXT...
OH, I GUESS I DO HAVE A NEXT GAME NOW.

I WON MY GAME TODAY, BUT FAILED WITH MY TENNIS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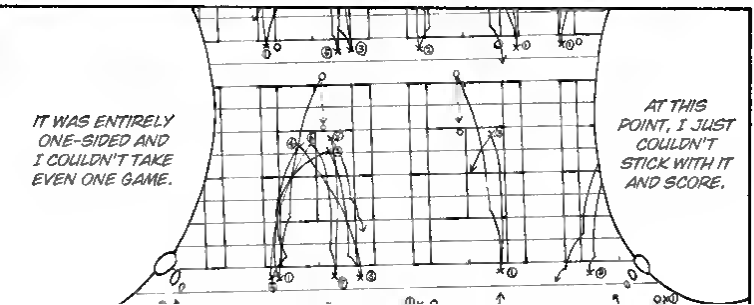
IT WAS ENTIRELY ONE-SIDED AND I COULDN'T TAKE EVEN ONE GAME.
AT THIS POINT, I JUST COULDN'T STICK WITH IT AND SCORE.

NO.65 IWASA-KUN AND NO.80 TANAKA-SAN, PLEASE MAKE YOUR WAY TO COURT TWO
THIS ISN'T THE PLACE TO GET SO INTO THIS!

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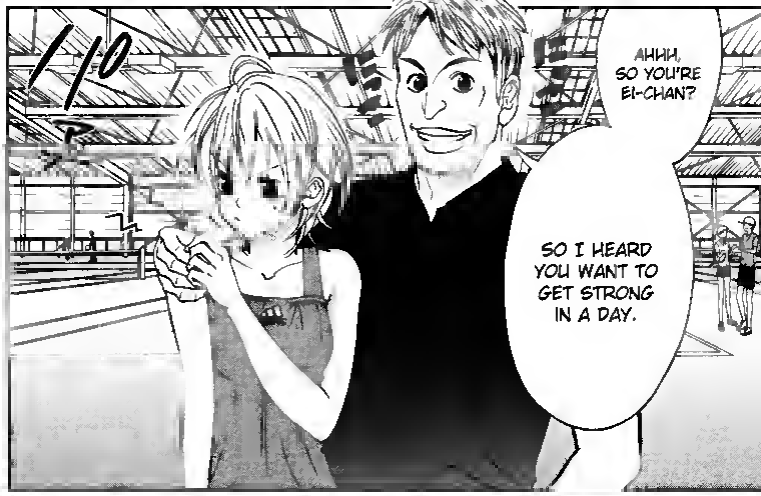
COACH MIURA!
UM, IS IT ALL RIGHT IF I GO BACK TO STC AHEAD OF EVERYONE?
THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO WORK ON UNTIL TOMORROW'S MATCH
WHAT HAVE YOU PLANNED THAT'S GOT YOU IN SUCH A RUSH?

I AM GOING TO TRY AND ASSEMBLE A WINNING SHOT FOR WHEN I MOVE UP THE COURT...
THAT CAN'T BE DONE IN A DAY, YOU KNOW.
BUT, IT'S BETTER THAN DOING NOTHING AT ALL.

THEN... MORE EFFICIENTLY.
HOW ABOUT SOME PRACTICE THAT WILL BRING OUT EFFICIENCY IN ONE DAY?
!?
EFFI-CIENCY IN A DAY?!

HEY, NATSU.
YEEES?
I STILL HAVE MATCHES I NEED TO WATCH.
SO COULD YOU GO BACK WITH MARUO-KUN?
YOU'RE GOING BACK TO PRACTICE, TOO, RIGHT?
MIKE SHOULD BE COMING TODAY, SO COULD YOU INTRODUCE MARUO TO HIM?
EH...!
MIKE... YOU MEAN THAT GUY? HE CAME BACK TO JAPAN... AGAIN?
NACCHAN?!
DON'T TALK LIKE THAT TO ME
LOOK, YOU! HE CAME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE BECAUSE I ASKED HIM TO!
ANYWAY, I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
IF ANYTHING COMES UP CONTACT ME.
YES SIIIR
WE'LL BE LEAVING, THEN!
MIKE?
HEY, WHO'S MIKE?
HE'S A COACH WHO COMES HERE EVERY NOW AND THEN FROM FLORIDA.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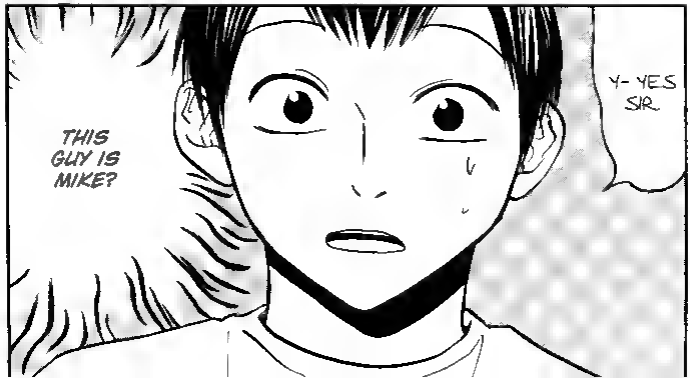
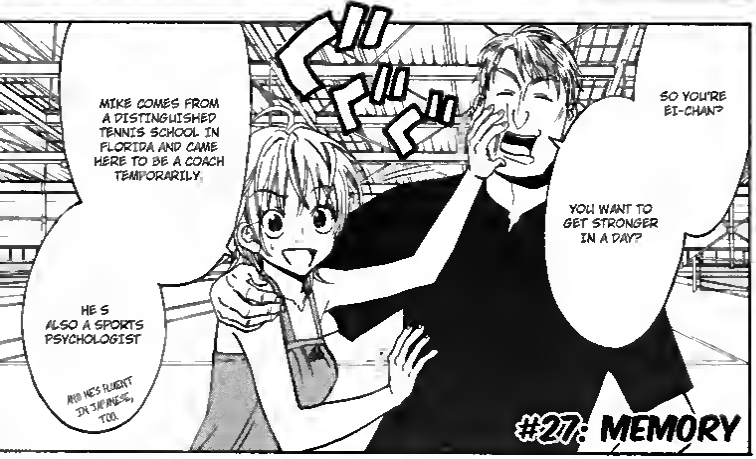
AHHH, SO YOU'RE EI-CHAN?
SO I HEARD YOU WANT TO GET STRONG IN A DAY.


Y- YES SIR.
THIS GUY IS MIKE?

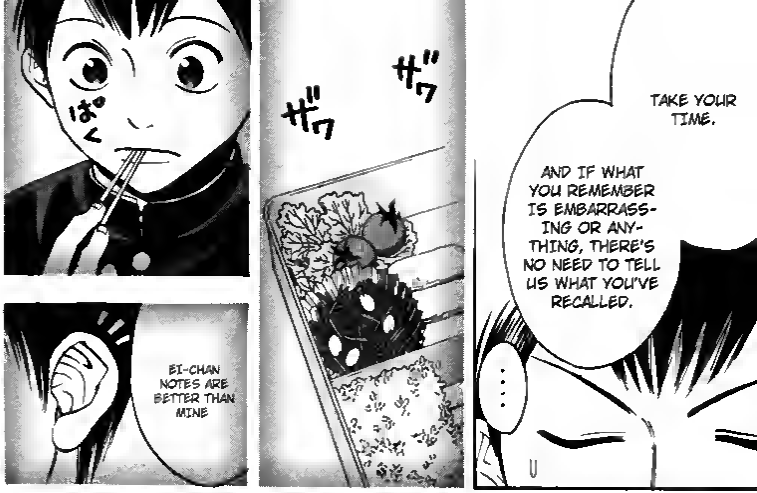
WAS WHAT THE COACH ASKED ME WHEN I WAS HEADING BACK TO STC, BUT...
"HOW ABOUT SOME PRACTICE THAT WILL BRING OUT EFFICIENCY IN ONE DAY?"


MIKE COMES FROM A DISTINGUISHED TENNIS SCHOOL IN FLORIDA AND CAME HERE TO BE A COACH TEMPORARILY.
HE'S ALSO A SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST
AND HE'S FLUENT IN JAPANESE, TOO.
SO YOU'RE EI-CHAN?
YOU WANT TO GET STRONGER IN A DAY?
#27: MEMORY

THIS GUY... IS A COACH?
SO RATHER THAN YOUR TECHNIQUE, HE'S A COACH WHO HELPS YOU WITH YOUR MENTAL STATE.
AND YOU ARE WAY TOO CLOSE, MIKE!
YOU'RE SO SHY, NATSU!

HUH?
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET STARTED. NOW, LET'S HAVE YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES!
HOW NICE TO MEET YOU! I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU FROM COACH MIURA! LET'S WORK WELL TOGETHER!
I'M... LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
MIKE'S A COACH TRUSTED BY ELITE PROS, SO I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING TO WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO
I GUESS...
DON'T WORRY. TRUST ME ON THIS!
CLOSE MY EYES—? WAIT... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
WHAT?!
ALL RIGHT, NOW TRY REMEMBERING THE TIME FROM WHEN YOU FIRST MET NATSU!
WESTHEMPSTEAD ATHLETICS
I REALLY WANTED TO WORK ON PRACTICING ON MOVING UP THE COURT AND SCORING...
I... SEE.

I DON'T SEE HOW THIS WORKS AT ALL!
I'M NOT JOKING.
IF YOU WANT TO GET ANY STRONGER IN A DAY, GO ON AND DO THIS RIGHT.
THE TIME WHEN WE FIRST MET...?
HMM...
I GOT YOUR NOTES A LITTLE DIRTY
I'M SORRY BI-CHAN.
AH.
COULD YOU BE BI-CHAN BY ANY CHANCE?
PLEA SURE TO MEET YOU.
MY NAME IS MIKUO EICHIROU
OH. I REMEMBER NOW
YOU'VE ONLY REMEMBERED IT SIMPLY AS AN IMAGE, RIGHT?
うん
TRY TO MAKE THAT MEMORY A BIT MORE REAL.
THE COLORS,
SOUNDS,
MOVE-MENTS ...
IF YOU CAN DO THAT, YOU'LL KNOW HOW EVERY-THING WAS AT THE TIME, AS IN THE TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY YOU FELT AT THAT POINT.
WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO HERE IS RECONSTRUCT THE IMAGE IMPRINTED IN YOUR HEART FROM THAT TIME.


TAKE YOUR TIME.
AND IF WHAT YOU REMEMBER IS EMBARRASSING OR ANYTHING, THERE'S NO NEED TO TELL US WHAT YOU'VE RECALLED.
...
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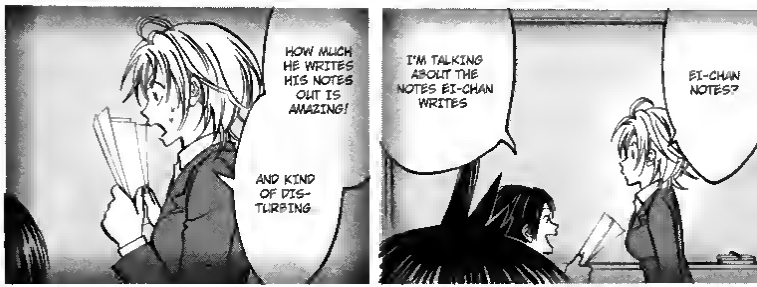
BI-CHAN NOTES ARE BETTER THAN MINE


HOW MUCH HE WRITES HIS NOTES OUT IS AMAZING!
AND KIND OF DISTURBING
BI-CHAN NOTES?
I'M TALKING ABOUT THE NOTES BI-CHAN WRITES

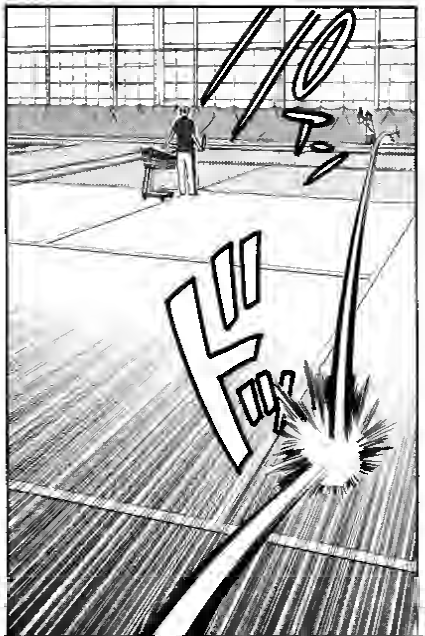
ALL RIGHT, THEN LET'S MOVE ON, BI-CHAN.
WHAT DID YOU NORMALLY TALK ABOUT WITH NATSU?
WHAT SEASON WAS IT? WHAT WAS THE WEATHER LIKE?
I..I REMEMBER
IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG, NATSU?
I'M REALLY, REALLY SORRY ABOUT WHAT I SAID THEN!
ズーン

CHEER FOR HIM DON'T THINK THAT HE'LL WIN JUST BECAUSE HE'S A FIRST SEED
YOU KEEP AT IT, TOO, EI-CHAN!
YOUR STUDIES ARE PRETTY IMPOR-TANT.
AH, WE'RE IN THE SAME CLASS THIS TIME, EI-CHAN!
LOOKING FORWARD TO BEING WITH YOU!
LET'S HURRY AND GET TO STC, EI-CHAN!
I WAS REALLY BAD AT FIRST BUT..

JUST DO IT LIKE YOU ALWAYS DO!
WH-WHAT ARE WE DOING...?

OK!!
LET'S GET THOSE BALLS ROLLING AND PRACTICE NOW!
EH!?

COME ON, COME ON, GET READY!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE...?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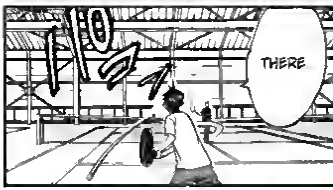

THERE

WELL, ANYWAY, GOT TO CONCENTRATE AND..

HUH?
WEST HEMISPHERE ATHLE
ALL RIGHT, THAT'S GOOD!
AH PL- PLEASE LET ME DO A LITTLE MORE.
IT'S OKAY. I KNOW THAT YOU CAN DO MORE THAN THIS!
!?
WHAT'S WRONG EI-CHAN?
WH- WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE? I CAN'T GET IT RIGHT.
THERE'S A SIMPLE REASON AS TO WHY YOU DIDN'T DO WELL.
YOUR HEART HAS COME INTO "COMBAT MODE".
WHAT YOU REMEMBERED EARLIER WERE YOUR MEMORIES OF NATSU!
SINCE FOR A MAN, THE "MODE OF CONFRONTING A WOMAN" IS PSYCHOLOGICALLY A "CONFLICT MODE", IT IS SOMETHING FAIRLY DIFFERENT FROM ITS OTHER MODE
HUH.

M- MIKE..
SO THE REASON YOU DID BADLY WAS BECAUSE OF NATSU!
AH!
THE OTHER MODE IS "LOVE MODE" AND WELL, IT MAY BE BETTER TO SAY THAT IT'S THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF THE FIRST!

THERE ARE TWO THINGS I'D LIKE FOR YOU KNOW NOW
ONE IS FOR YOU TO PLAY TENNIS BY WHAT RULES YOUR HEART MOST.
THE SECOND IS THAT THE STRONG EFFECT OF THE MEMORIES YOU HAVE OF YOUR TIME WITH NATSU INDICATE JUST HOW MUCH THE "POWER OF MEMORY" CAN MAKE YOU EXCEL...!

KEEPING THAT IN MIND WILL MAKE IT WAY EASIER TO GET STRONGER IN A DAY.
IS THERE A POINT YOU'RE TRYING TO MAKE WITH THIS?
THE "POWER OF MEMORY" CAN MAKE ME EXCEL...?
WEST HEMPSTEAD

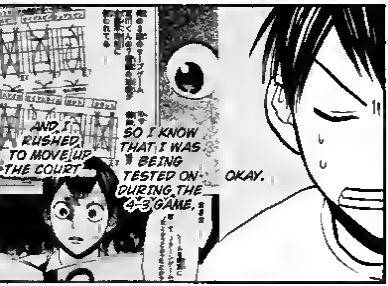
OKAY, EI-CHAN,
SO IN THAT CASE,
WHEN YOU HAD THAT MEMORY OF NATSU, YOUR TENNIS GOT A BIT BAD.
GOOD LUCK, EI-CHAN!
YEAH... THANKS!
YOU CAN GO BACK TO DOING YOUR OWN WORK-OUT REGIMEN, NATSU.
ALL RIGHT THEN, LET'S GET STARTED!
I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND WHERE I'M GOING WITH THIS
LET'S START WITH YOU REMEMBERING THE TIME WHEN YOU WERE AT YOUR BEST.
IT MEANS THAT YOU CAN ALSO GET BETTER DEPENDING ON WHAT'S IN THAT MEMORY.
OR DO YOU DISAGREE?

HMM...? WHEN EXACTLY.. WAS I AT MY BEST?
ALL RIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH!
WHAT, ALREADY?
OKAY, HERE WE GO!
WAH!
ALL RIGHT, IT'S MEMORY TIME AGAIN!
UGH..
WEST HE
ATHLETICS

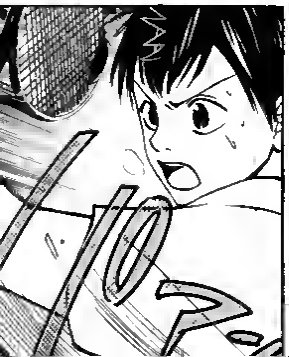
HM?
PL-PLEASE WAIT A MOMENT!
DECIDE ON WHAT TO REMEMBER AHEAD OF TIME!
!
YOU ONLY HAVE 20 SECONDS TO SCORE A POINT IN TENNIS.
THERE'S NO TIME FOR YOU TO THINK ABOUT WHAT TO REMEMBER!
THIS IS A GOLD MINE EI-CHAN!
OH AMAZ-ING
THEY'RE MY TENNIS NOTES
WHAT'S THAT?
HMM, SHOULD BE SOME-WHERE AROUND HERE...
ALL RIGHT, YOU HAVE 20 SECONDS!
THOSE NOTES WILL BE A BIG HELP TO YOUR REMEMBERING CLEARLY.
SIGHT, HEARING, SMELL, AND TOUCH. USE EVERY ONE OF THESE SENSES TO THEIR FULLEST!

OKAY, THINK TO THE GAME WHEN I KEPT 4-4 AGAINST MIYAGAWA ..
THE WEATHER WAS GOOD,
AND I FORGOT HOW HOT IT WAS WHEN WE WERE IN MID-PLAY BUT,
AND MY MOUTH HAD FELT KIND OF DRY, ..
IT SEEMED LIKE MY SKIN HAD STARTED TO BURN
BUT I WAS THINKING MORE ABOUT WHERE THE BALL WOULD COME TO NEXT
AND WHERE IT WOULD CHANGE RATHER THAN ANYTHING ELSE .
TIME'S UP! I'M HITTING THE BALL OVER NOW!
DAMN 20 SECONDS IS REALLY SHORT
THIS IS HARDER THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE..
WEST HEMPSTEAD
ATHLETIC
FLY

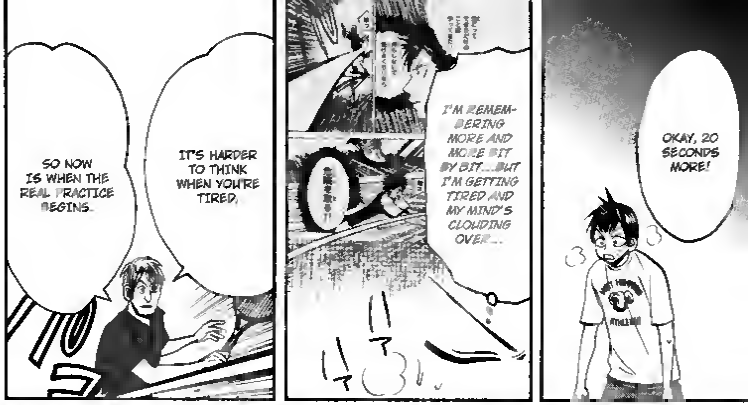
THAT WAS GOOD!
YOU'RE GETTING BETTER!

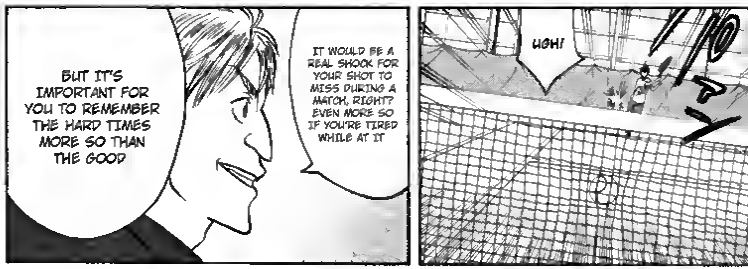

AND I RUSHED TO MOVE UP THE COURT
SO I KNOW THAT I WAS BEING TESTED ON DURING THE 4-3 GAME.
OKAY.

YOUR HEART HAS REACHED "COMBAT MODE",
AND YOU'RE GETTING CLOSER TO THE BETTER CONDITION YOU WERE IN DURING THE MATCH.
ALL RIGHT. YOU'VE GOT ANOTHER 20 SECONDS



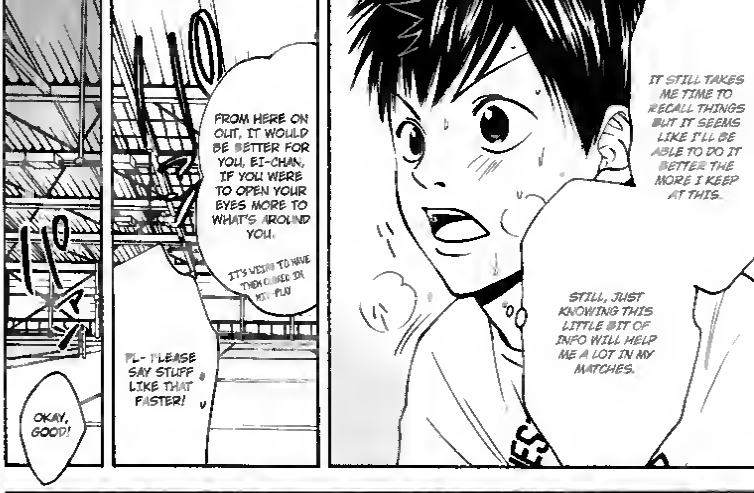
TIME FOR THE NEXT BALL!

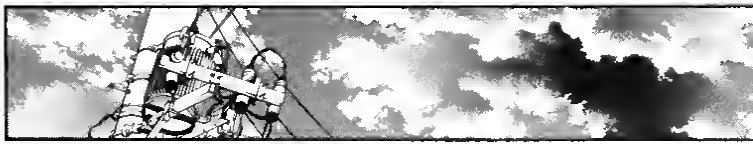

OKAY, 20 SECONDS MORE!
I'M REMEMBERING MORE AND MORE BIT BY BIT...BUT I'M GETTING TIRED AND MY MIND'S CLOUDING OVER...
IT'S HARDER TO THINK WHEN YOU'RE TIRED.
SO NOW IS WHEN THE REAL PRACTICE BEGINS.


UGH!
IT WOULD BE A REAL SHOCK FOR YOUR SHOT TO MISS DURING A MATCH, RIGHT? EVEN MORE SO IF YOU'RE TIRED WHILE AT IT
BUT IT'S IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO REMEMBER THE HARD TIMES MORE SO THAN THE GOOD

TENNIS IS A SPORT WHERE YOU MUST HAVE GREAT CONTROL OVER YOUR MENTAL STATE.
NO MATTER WHAT TIME IT IS, 20 SECONDS IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU TO CLEARLY RECALL SOMETHING
DON'T YOU THINK IT WOULD BE MORE LUCRATIVE TO YOUR GAME IF YOU WERE ABLE TO MAKE THE BEST MINDSET POSSIBLE FOR YOURSELF?
WEST HEMPSTEAD
ATHLETICS

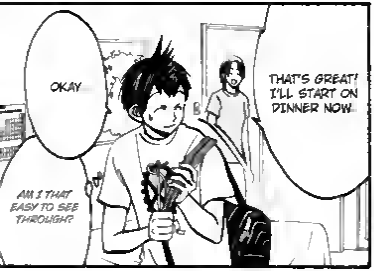
DO YOU GET IT NOW?
IT'S THE SAME KIND OF TECHNIQUE YOU USE WITH YOUR HEART... YOU TRAIN AND PRACTICE WITH IT.
YOU HADN'T KNOWN THAT BEFORE. YOUR MENTAL STATE NOW HAS ADVANCED UP FROM NOTHING.
THIS IS A REALLY BIG ADVANCEMENT. EVEN THOUGH IT'S ONLY FOR ONE DAY, YOU'LL CHANGE QUITE A BIT.
I CAN'T DENY THAT THERE'S A DEFINITE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEN AND NOW
!!
HAH!
!?
!?
NOT TO MENTION... WHEN I REMEMBER BACK REALLY WELL, I CAN MOVE AROUND BETTER, TOO.


IT STILL TAKES ME TIME TO RECALL THINGS BUT IT SEEMS LIKE I'LL BE ABLE TO DO IT BETTER THE MORE I KEEP AT THIS.
STILL, JUST KNOWING THIS LITTLE BIT OF INFO WILL HELP ME A LOT IN MY MATCHES.
FROM HERE ON OUT, IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR YOU, EI-CHAN, IF YOU WERE TO OPEN YOUR EYES MORE TO WHAT'S AROUND YOU.
IT'S VERY TO HAVE THEM CLOSE IN MY PLAY
PL- PLEASE SAY STUFF LIKE THAT FASTER!
OKAY, GOOD!



HMMM.
BUT MIKE'S PRACTICE WAS REALLY INTERESTING HE'S PRETTY AMAZING
GOOD JOB TODAY, EI-CHAN
AHH TODAY REALLY WORE ME OUT.
BUT MIKE DOESN'T REALLY TEACH ME ANYTHING
HE DOES ALWAYS CLING TO ME THOUGH...
YOU DON'T THINK SO?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WELL YOU ARE AN AMAZING PERSON NATSU...
I THINK I GET WHERE HE'S COMING FROM.
THAT'S WHAT HE'S ALWAYS TELLING ME ANYWAY
YOU CAN COME TALK TO ME ANYTIME SOMETHING'S BOTHERING YOU!
BUT YOU HAVE SUCH A TALENTED MENTAL STATE THAT THERE'S NO REASON TO, IS THERE?!


OKAY
THAT'S GREAT! I'LL START ON DINNER NOW.
AM I THAT EASY TO SEE THROUGH?

WELCOME HOME EIICHIROU BY THE SOUND OF YOUR VOICE I'M GUESSING YOU WON?
I'M HOME!
HUH. ?! OH, YEAH..

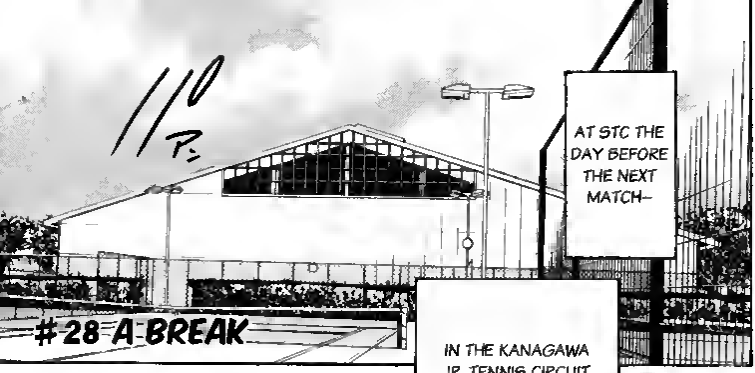
THE TOURNAMENT'S NOT OVER YET
THAT'S RIGHT I WON TODAY'S MATCHES
テニス 10

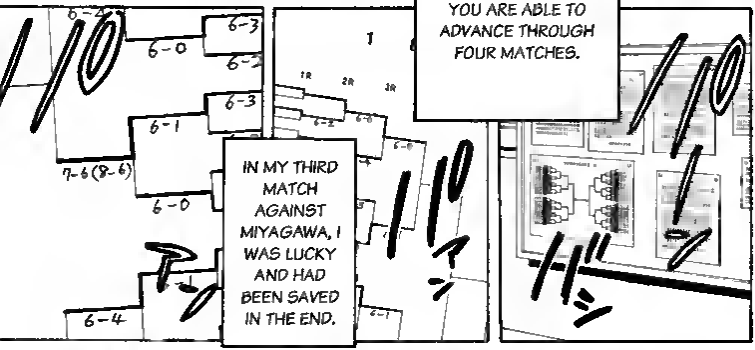
WHAT A LONG DAY...

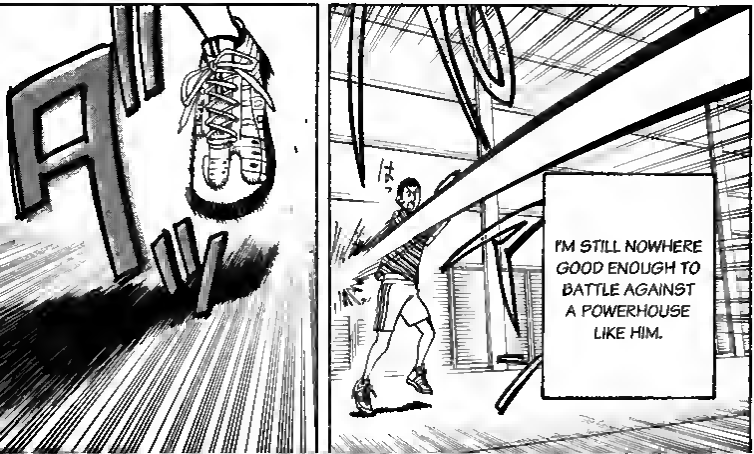
YOU BUILD UP A LOT OF PRACTICE IN YOUR HEART, TOO
SEEING AS YOU CAN ALWAYS TAKE 20 SECONDS TO PRACTICE REMEMBERING WHEN YOU WERE AT YOUR BEST.

EIICHIROU! DINNER'S READY!

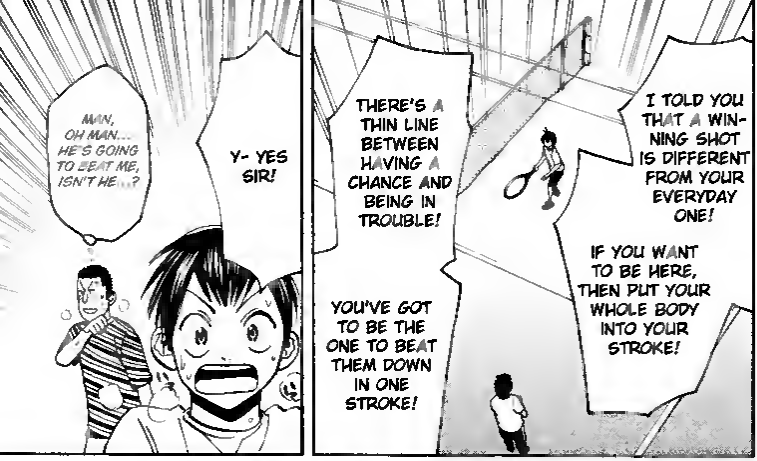
Baby Steps


#28 A BREAK
AT STC THE DAY BEFORE THE NEXT MATCH--

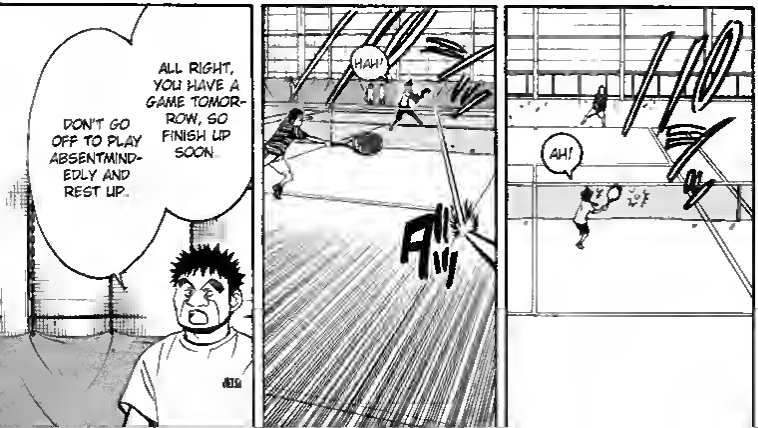

IN THE KANAGAWA JR. TENNIS CIRCUIT, YOU ARE ABLE TO ADVANCE THROUGH FOUR MATCHES.
IN MY THIRD MATCH AGAINST MIYAGAWA, I WAS LUCKY AND HAD BEEN SAVED IN THE END.
6-0
6-3
6-1
7-6(8-6)
6-4
1R
2R
3R


I'M STILL NOWHERE GOOD ENOUGH TO BATTLE AGAINST A POWERHOUSE LIKE HIM.

ドン
HAH!
YOU'RE TOO GENTLE WITH THE BALL!


I TOLD YOU THAT A WINNING SHOT IS DIFFERENT FROM YOUR EVERYDAY ONE!
IF YOU WANT TO BE HERE, THEN PUT YOUR WHOLE BODY INTO YOUR STROKE!
THERE'S A THIN LINE BETWEEN HAVING A CHANCE AND BEING IN TROUBLE!
YOU'VE GOT TO BE THE ONE TO BEAT THEM DOWN IN ONE STROKE!
Y- YES SIR!
MAN, OH MAN... HE'S GOING TO BEAT ME, ISN'T HE...?

EVEN SAYING THAT, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE REACHED THE FOURTH MATCH,
TWENTY SECONDS IS GOOD ENOUGH TO THINK BACK
AND I WANT TO TRY TESTING OUT THE LIMITS OF WHAT I CAN DO.


ALL RIGHT, YOU HAVE A GAME TOMORROW, SO FINISH UP SOON.
DON'T GO OFF TO PLAY ABSENTMINDEDLY AND REST UP.
HAH!
AH!

NICE JOB OUT THERE TODAY, EI-CHAN.
YOU'RE WORKING REALLY HARD EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE GOT A MATCH TOMORROW
AH, NACCHAN, YOU DID WELL OUT THERE, TOO.
HUH? ARE YOU ALREADY DONE FOR THE DAY, TOO?
YEP, I HAVE A MATCH TOMORROW, TOO.
I SEE.
HEY THERE, NATSU! EI-CHAN!
OH, MIKE!
HELLO SIR!
EI-CHAN, THIS IS MY EMAIL ADDRESS
I'VE GOT TO HEAD OUT OF JAPAN TODAY.
WHAT, REALLY?!
IT'S REALLY SOMETHING, HOW CLOSELY RELATED YOUR HEART AND YOUR TENNIS ARE, HUH?
I'VE STILL GOT PLENTY TO TEACH YOU, SO SHOOT ME AN EMAIL ANYTIME!
YES SIR! THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
AND SEE YOU LATER, TOO, NATSU!
YOUR HUG IS TOO LONG

YOU'VE GOTTEN QUITE A BIT INTO TENNIS, EI-CHAN.
Hehehe!
Hehehe!
NOT AS MUCH AS YOU, NACCHAN.
SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW.
LET'S BOTH DO OUR BEST.
GOTCHA.

I CAN'T BELIEVE MIYAGAWA LOST IN THE THIRD MATCH.
IT'S THE THIRD DAY OF THE KANAGAWA JR. TENNIS CIRCUIT.
GUESS I'LL GO WATCH THE MATCH OF MARUO VERSUS TERASHIMA
IF MARUO WINS THIS ONE, HE'LL BE IN THE TOP EIGHT AS A NON-SEEDER, WON'T HE?
Guess he's the real thing, huh?
A DIFFERENT SEED TOOK HIS PLACE, RIGHT?
THE GUY'S BECOME QUITE THE RUMOR.
HE WRITES IN HIS NOTEBOOK DURING THE MATCH AND IS REAL TENACIOUS OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
I THOUGHT I'D BE AGAINST MIYAGAWA, BUT IT'S A NON-SEEDER INSTEAD.
もぐ
もぐ
TERASHIMA HAYATO (HANEDA CLUB)
WELL, WHATEVER. I'VE GOT TO BE CAREFUL.
THIS IS THE MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR ME AS A 16TH SEEDER.

I'VE GOT TO DO ALL I CAN!!
MUST TAKE THIS CHANCE!
I'LL LOSE IF I DON'T DO ANYTHING!
REMEMBER THE TIME WHEN I WAS AT MY BEST ...
TERASHIMA HIRATO, 2ND-YEAR AT SHOURYOU HIGH SCHOOL, A MEMBER OF THE HANEDA CLUB. AN OFFENSIVE, ALL-ROUNDER ATTACK TYPE. HAS A HIGHLY POWERFUL FOREHAND STROKE, AND TAKES AN INITIATIVE IN PLAY. USED A BASIC PATTERN WHEN HE PLAYED BEFORE. ALTHOUGH HE HAS A FOREHAND STROKE THAT STRIKES A BALL MORE THAN 30% OF THE TIME, HE IS NOT NECESSARILY WEAK WITH HIS BACKSTROKE. AS HE'S STRONG WHEN RUSHING THROUGH WITH A FAST TEMPO, HE TRIES NOT TO KEEP ANY KIND OF PACE
テニス 20
NO.81 TERASHIMA-KUN AND NO.89 MAKUO-KUN, PLEASE MAKE YOUR WAY TO COURT TWO.

HOLD ON A SECOND...YOU KEPT ASKING ABOUT EI-CHAN AND HIS TENNIS, SO THAT'S WHY I INVITED YOU TO COME ALONG...
GEEZ, DON'T INVITE ME AND THEN MAKE US LATE!
BESIDES, HE'S WELL-KNOWN FOR HAVING LONG MATCHES.
WHAT. DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
BEING A LITTLE LATE WON'T HURT US.
I DID NOT GO ON ASKING ABOUT THAT!
Don't just make up lies by yourself
THEY SAID HE'S AT COURT TWO
IS COURT TWO THAT WAY?
TO MAKE IT SHORT, HE HAS REEEEALLY SIMPLE MATCHES, SO I WOULDN'T GET YOUR HOPES TOO HIGH
HIM GETTING 5TH SEED'S PRETTY MUCH PURE LUCK
EXPECTATIONS I'VE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!

GAME SET WON BY MARUO!
HUH?
WHAT HAPPENED?! HE LOST?!
WH... YOU'RE KIDDING!

6
2
WHAT, REALLY?! THAT'S GREAT!
NO... HE WON... BIG TIME, TOO.

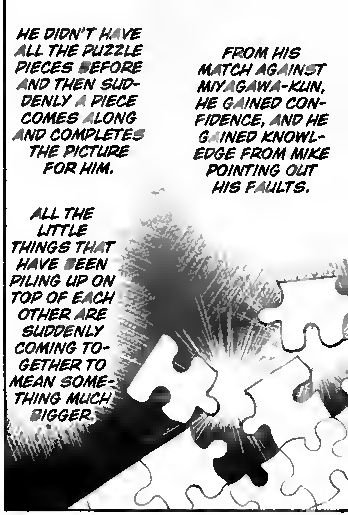
?
NO, NO, NO...
HIS OPPONENT WAS A 16TH SEED, RIGHT?

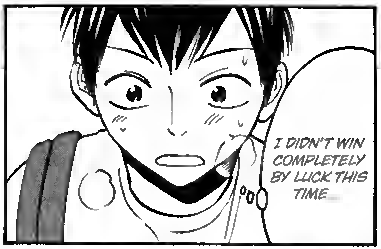
HEY, HEY, HEY! WHAT HAPPENED OUT THERE, EI-CHAN?!
パス!
AH, KAGEYAMA! YOU CAME TO WATCH?

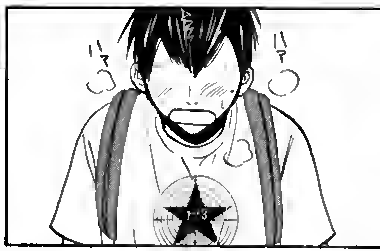
HMM.. NOT SURE MYSELF, BUT,
FOR SOME REASON, I'M FEELING REALLY GOOD TODAY.
YOU'RE.. FEELING GOOD? Is that so?
HUH? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, SASAKI-SAN?
HE MEANS WHY DID YOU WANT TO COME SEE HIS MATCH.
KYAAAA!
I HAD SOME FREE TIME TODAY!
THEY GET ALONG PRETTY WELL
O-OKAY, SEE YOU LATER.
OH YEAH, MY TENNIS GUT BROKE, SO I'M HEADING OVER TO THE SHOP!
CRAAAAZY.. ANIKI'S GOTTEN SO STRONG!
A NON-SEEDED PLAYER THAT KEEPS ON TAKING DOWN SEEDED PLAYERS FOR SOME UN-KNOWN REASON ISN'T SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS ONLY IN TENNIS.

NOW, MARUO JUST NEEDS TO GET OVER THIS NEXT HURDLE.

HE'S RIDING UP ON A LARGE WAVE AND IS IN THE BEST CONDITION EVER.


HE DIDN'T HAVE ALL THE PUZZLE PIECES BEFORE AND THEN SUDDENLY A PIECE COMES ALONG AND COMPLETES THE PICTURE FOR HIM.
FROM HIS MATCH AGAINST MIYAGAWA-KUN, HE GAINED CONFIDENCE, AND HE GAINED KNOWLEDGE FROM MIKE POINTING OUT HIS FAULTS.
ALL THE LITTLE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN PILING UP ON TOP OF EACH OTHER ARE SUDDENLY COMING TOGETHER TO MEAN SOMETHING MUCH BIGGER.


I DIDN'T WIN COMPLETELY BY LUCK THIS TIME...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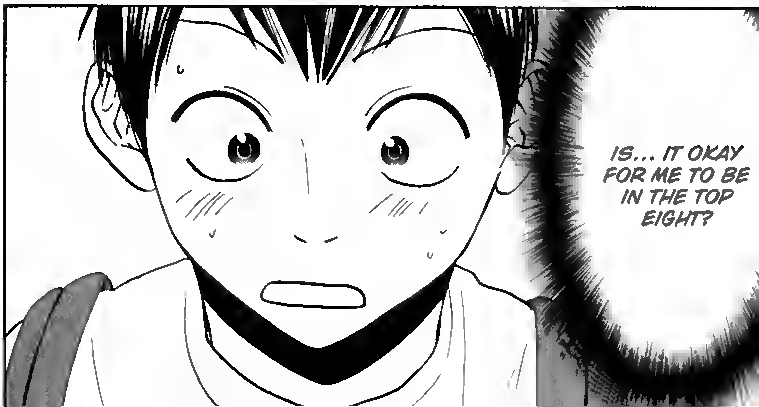
IS... IT OKAY FOR ME TO BE IN THE TOP EIGHT?

WELCOME!
HEAD
Wilson
YAMAMOTO TENNIS SHOP
カ"!
!
HUH ...
IWASA-KUN?!
EXC- EXCUSE ME, COULD YOU DRAW TOGETHER A GUT FOR ME RIGHT NOW?
CERTAINLY
I-I GO UP AGAINST HIM NEXT...

SEEMS LIKE ALL OF MY CUSTOMERS TODAY ARE PART OF THE KANAGAWA JR.
IT WILL TAKE ABOUT AN HOUR TO FIX THIS, SO PLEASE HAVE A SEAT TO WAIT.
I'll take that for you.
I'M APPRE-CIATIVE.
DUNLOP
prince
HE REALLY DOES ALWAYS READ BOOKS
HE SKILLFULLY CARRIES OUT ALL HIS SHOTS, IS AN ALL-ROUNDER, AND THE TRICKIER THE SHOT, ESPE-CIALLY LIKE WITH A LOB OR DROP, THE MORE ACCURATE HE GETS. SEEMS LIKE HIS PAR-ENTS ARE ARTISTS AND HE, HIMSELF, LOVES READING BOOKS. FROM THE LOOKS OF IT, HE'S ALSO GOT A REAL QUIET PERSONALITY.
HE PROBABLY DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT ME
AND DIFFICULT ONES AT THAT.
BOOK TITLE: COCTEAU'S COLLECTION OF POETRY
YOU NEED SOMETHING?
CRAP!!
UH.. MY NAME IS MARUO EIICHIROU.
prince

I GO UP AGAINST YOU NEXT ...
IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU.
OH, YEAH... NICE MEETING YOU.
HERE YOU ARE, IWASA-KUN. THANK YOU FOR WAITING.
WHA THAT WAS A KINDA COLD RE-SPONSE

HUH?
He smiled ...?
H-HE... SEEMS KIND OF WEIRD
NOT AT ALL PLEASE COME AGAIN!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
OHH, SO YOU GO UP AGAINST IWAIZUMI-KUN NEXT, DON'T YOU?
AH, YES MA'AM.

WHO KNOWS?
JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO, I ASKED HIM WHO HIS OPPONENT WAS, AND...
I SEE, I SEE, WHAT A COINCI-DENCE.
HE TOLD ME HE'S HAPPIEST WHEN HE DRAWS A GOOD PICTURE ON THE COURT.
HE'S AN INTEREST-ING KID.
IN THE TOP EIGHT, YOU NORMALLY KNOW WHO YOUR OPPONENT IS THOUGH, RIGHT?
WAS WHAT HE SAID.
AH, I'M SORRY... BUT I DON'T THINK THAT MEANS HE'S NOT INTERESTED BECAUSE THE OPPONENT IS YOU.
OTHERS ALWAYS THINK HE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT THEM AT FIRST.
A PICTURE ON THE COURT?
BUT I SUP-POSE HIS DRAWINGS HAVE A LOT TO DO WITH HOW STRONG HE IS IN TENNIS.
HE SAID HE'S LIKE AN ARTIST - HIS PARENTS WERE PROBABLY A BIG INFLUENCE ON THAT.

I DON'T REALLY GET WHAT THAT KID'S THINKING ABOUT.
HE SAID, "I'M HAPPIEST WHEN I DRAW A GOOD PICTURE ON THE COURT."
SO HE'S A 3RD SEED THAT'S EVEN STRONGER THAN BOTH MIYAGAWA AND OOBAYASHI...
IWASA HIROMI...
WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS HE?

RAW PROVIDER: IMANGASCANS
TRANSLATOR: TEISHOU
PROOFREADER: GEORGI
CLEANER: DEATHY80
TYPESETTER: KAJII
Q-CER: LORDLESTAT

iMANGA scanlations

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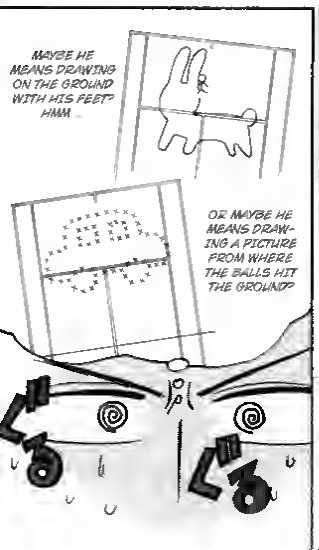
#29: A WORLD OF ITS OWN


MAYBE HE MEANS DRAWING ON THE GROUND WITH HIS FEET? HMM ...
OR MAYBE HE MEANS DRAWING A PICTURE FROM WHERE THE BALLS HIT THE GROUND?
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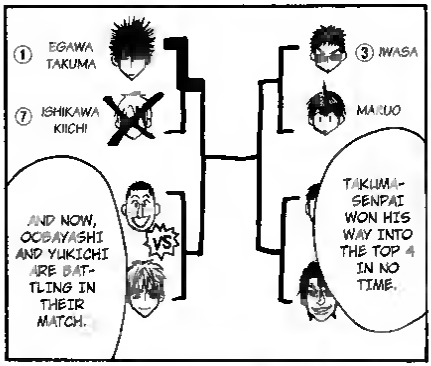
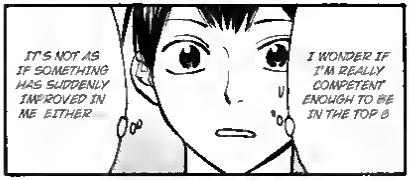
THE TOP 8 WERE JUST DECIDED ON.

YO, EI-CHAN! YOU'RE BACK PRETTY LATE!


① EGAWA TAKUMA
⑦ ISHIKAWA KIICHI
③ IWASA
MARUO
AND NOW, OOBAYASHI AND YUKICHI ARE BATTLING IN THEIR MATCH.
VS
TAKUMA-SENPAI WON HIS WAY INTO THE TOP 4 IN NO TIME.

NO... IT JUST HASN'T HIT ME YET
オイオイ
YOU SOUND LIKE IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU.

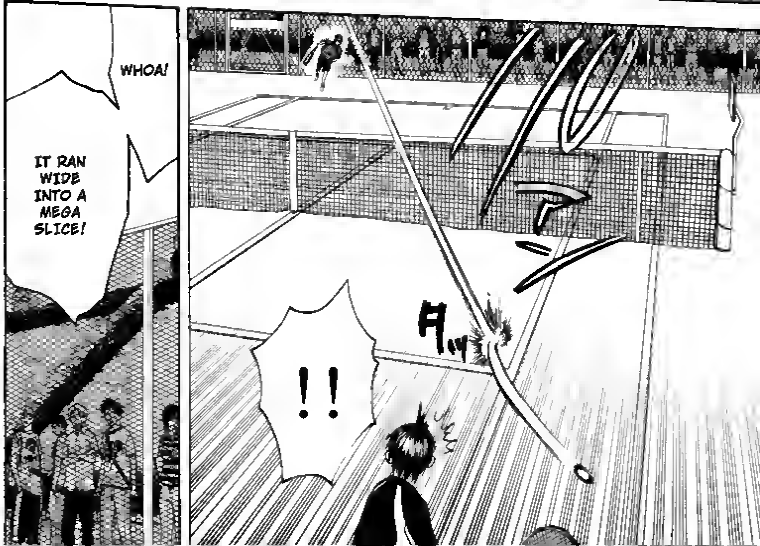

IT'S NOT AS IF SOMETHING HAS SUDDENLY IMPROVED IN ME EITHER...
I WONDER IF I'M REALLY COMPETENT ENOUGH TO BE IN THE TOP 8

I WASN'T IN A CONDITION AS GOOD IN THAT MATCH AS I WAS AGAINST TERASHIMA-KUN, EITHER.
I GUESS MY WIN AGAINST MIYAGAWA-KUN WAS ALL LUCK AFTER ALL.

Y-YEAH, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
WOW, MAN, YOU'RE REALLY IN THE TOP 8

ONCE THIS GAME ENDS, THEN I WILL KNOW EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED!
WHATEVER THE CASE I'LL KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON LATER!
NO NO NO! IT'S A FACT THAT I'VE COME THIS FAR INTO THE TOURNAMENT!
IT'S THE FIFTH MATCH IWASA HIROMI VERSUS MARUO EICHIROU
A ONE-SET MATCH! IWASA SERVES! ALL PLAY!

CONCEN-
TRATE!


WHOA!
IT RAN WIDE INTO A MEGA SLICE!
!!

THAT WAS AN AMAZING VARIATION!
GUH!
A CROSS ?!
HUH?!
パーン
....

GO BACK, GO BACK!
TOWARDS OPEN COURT
TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COURT
WHY WOULD YOU SEND A LOB STRAIGHT TO THE MIDDLE OF THE COURT?!
WH-WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
NORMALLY WHEN YOU SEND AN OPPONENT TO THE OUTER BOUNDARIES, WOULDN'T YOU SEND A SHOT TOWARDS THE OPEN COURT OR TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO SEND IT TO THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE COURT?!
HAH!
ANOTHER LOB?!
DON'T YOU USUALLY USE A LOB OVER THE OPPONENT'S HEAD TO CHANGE THE PACE OF THE GAME?!
AGAIN?!

THE SHOTS ARE SO DEEP THOUGH, SO IT'S SURPRISINGLY HARD TO GET THEM.
BUT THAT'S NOT EXACTLY A VERY GOOD WAY TO ATTACK!
WHA? THEY'RE GETTING SHALLOWER AND SHALLOWER BIT BY BIT
HUH? THAT ONE WASN'T AS DEEP THIS TIME
I-IS THIS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO GO FOR IT?!
OR IS HE INVITING ME TO GO TAKE THE CHANCE?!

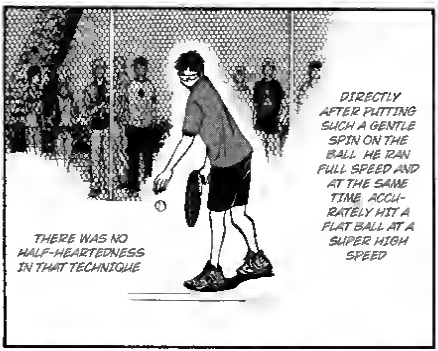
IF HE'S MAKING THE BALLS THIS SHALLOW, THEN THIS IS DEFINITELY A CHANCE FOR ME TO TAKE!
HAH!
110 km/h

15-0 LOVE.
TCH.
WHOA! HE JUST SENT DOWN AN INCREDIBLY STRONG PASSING SHOT OUT OF NOWHERE!
WHAT A CRAZY TEMPO!

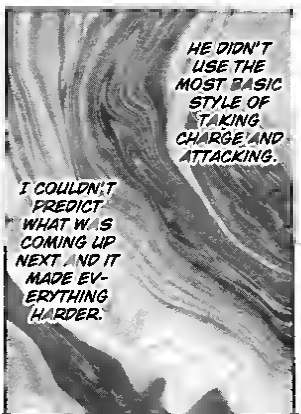
HUH?
EVEN THOUGH HE SCORED A POINT?
YES, STRANGE ISN'T IT?
I DON'T REALLY GET IT...
BY THE WAY, WHAT'S IS-O MEAN?

YEAH... IT SEEMED LIKE THE BALL DIDN'T GO THE WAY HE THOUGHT IT WOULD...

DID HE GET A LITTLE MAD OR SOMETHING JUST THEN...?
HE SAID "TCH" AND EVERYTHING.


DIRECTLY AFTER PUTTING SUCH A GENTLE SPIN ON THE BALL HE RAN FULL SPEED AND AT THE SAME TIME ACCURATELY HIT A FLAT BALL AT A SUPER HIGH SPEED
THERE WAS NO HALF-HEARTEDNESS IN THAT TECHNIQUE

HE SCORED ON ME THAT WAS AN AMAZING SHOT


HE DIDN'T USE THE MOST BASIC STYLE OF TAKING CHARGE AND ATTACKING.
I COULDN'T PREDICT WHAT WAS COMING UP NEXT AND IT MADE EVERYTHING HARDER.

BUT... WHAT WAS UP WITH BEFORE WITH THAT WEIRD STYLE HE HAD?

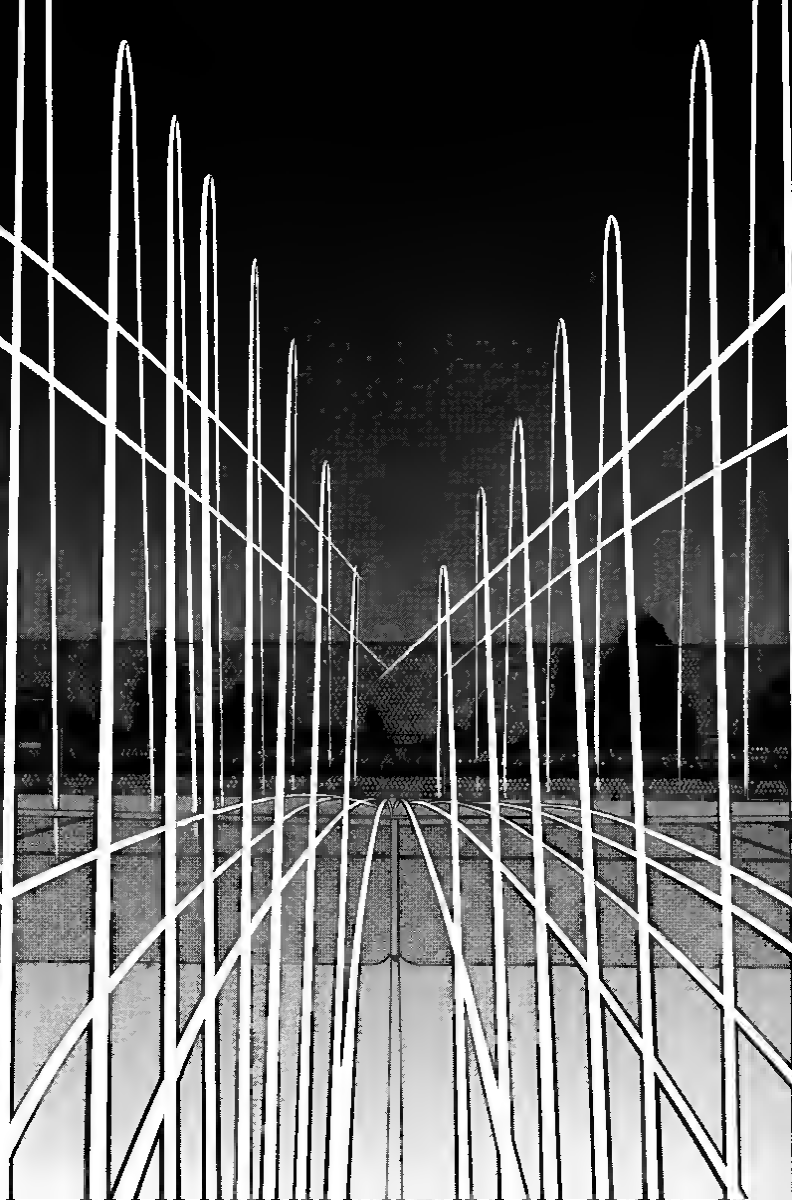
HE TOLD ME HE'S HAPPIEST WHEN HE DRAWS A GOOD PICTURE ON THE COURT.
HE'S AN INTERESTING KID.
...DOES THIS HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT CONVERSATION?
WHAT KIND OF STYLE DOES HE HAVE THEN?
A STYLE WHERE YOU DRAW PICTURES ON THE COURT?
HMM...I'M NOT GETTING THIS AT ALL.
HUH..I GET THE FEELING EI-CHAN'S GOING TO HAVE A HARD MATCH.
GUH!
...

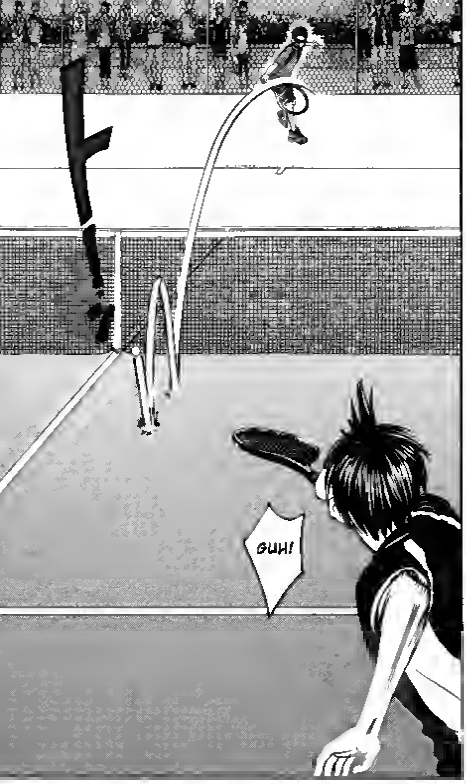
THERE'S NOT ONE PERSON WHO CAN COMPREHEND IWASA'S STYLE.
IT'S A VERY ORIGINAL STYLE THAT ONLY I CAN UNDERSTAND, BECAUSE I'VE SEEN HIM DO IT SINCE HE WAS YOUNGER.
THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING, THIS WILL BE THE FIRST OPPONENT TO GIVE IW SA TROUBLE.
HMM, HE'S ABLE TO FIGHT LIKE IWASA.
IN AFFILIATION WITH IWASA FAR SIDE TENNIS CLUB COACH
.....
I DRAW PICTURES WITH THE BALL.
HAVE A GOOD DAY, COACH!
ALL OF YOU TAKE CARE GETTING HOME!
HEY IWASA. YOU'VE GOTTEN BETTER CONTROL OVER YOUR BALLS LATELY
IS THERE SOME KIND OF TRICK YOU'RE USING?

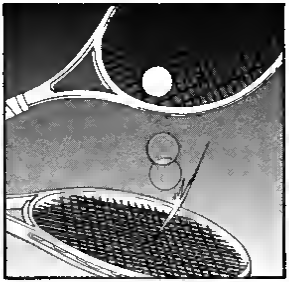
ARTISTS HAVE UNSTABLE LIFESTYLES, AND THEY SAID IT'S HARD TO BECOME A TOP-CLASS ARTIST...
MY...PARENTS SAID THAT I COULDN'T DRAW AT HOME.
I SUPPOSE YOU'VE BEEN THINKING OF SOME INTERESTING THINGS THEN, HUH.
...AH, SPEAKING OF WHICH, YOUR PARENTS ARE ARTISTS, AREN'T THEY?
"PICTURES WITH THE BALL"...?
BUT I GET REALLY HAPPY WHEN I DRAW GOOD PICTURES ON THE COURT AND TENNIS IS A LOT MORE FUN NOW SINCE I'M GETTING BETTER AT IT
WELL, NOW THAT IS SOMETHING
.....
I SEE
AND THEN THAT STYLE CAME TO BE I NEVER THOUGHT HE'D BE SO STRONG NOW.
ALL RIGHT THEN, SHOW ME HOW YOU DRAW YOUR PICTURES
OKAY.

40-0, LOVE.
I WONDER IF THERE'S SOME KIND OF RULE HE GOES BY...?
AND EVEN IF I WAIT AROUND, HE'LL SEND ME FLYING ALL AROUND THE COURT WITH HIS PACE AND I WON'T BE ABLE TO MAKE THE FINAL SHOT.
HE DID IT AGAIN! WHEN I WENT TO ATTACK, HE COUNTERED ME!
IF HE'S DRAWING A PICTURE ON THE GROUND, THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY NEED TO DO HIGH BALLS...
OH, THAT'S RIGHT... HE'S BEEN DOING A LOT OF LOBS.

ANYWAY, THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING HE'S DOING DURING HIS PLAY...
.....

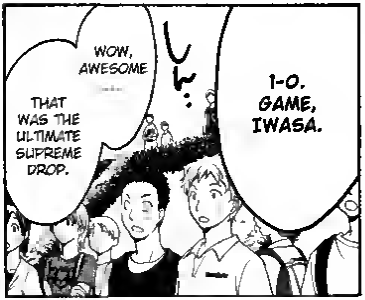



GUH!



TOWARD'S THE FRONT ?!

I DON'T GET IT ...


1-0. GAME, IWASA.
ﾊﾊｯ
WOW, AWESOME
THAT WAS THE ULTIMATE SUPREME DROP.

VAN GOGH'S PIECE, "LANE OF POPLARS AT SUNSET", COMPLETE!

EXACTLY HOW.. AM I SUPPOSED TO FIGHT THIS GUY?
HIS TENNIS WAS SO UN-ORTHODOX, I COULDN'T READ IT AT ALL.

RAW PROVIDER: IMANGASCANS
TRANSLATOR: TEISHOU
PROOFREADER: GEORGI
CLEANER: DEATHY80
TYPESETTER: LORDLESTAT
Q-CER: KAJII

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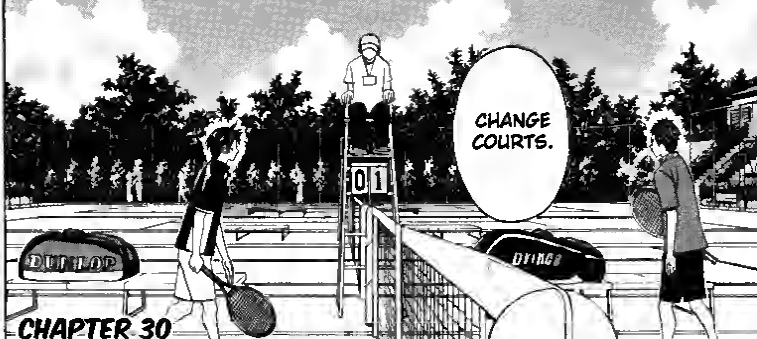
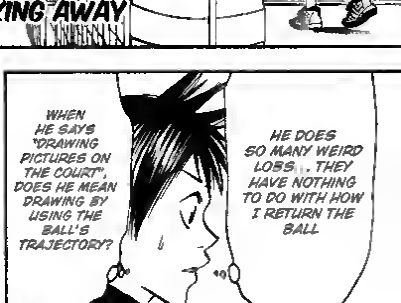
Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ
A DROP SHOT!
VAN GOGH'S PIECE, "LANE OF POPLARS AT SUNSET", COMPLETE!
GUH!
1-0. GAME, IWASA.
ドン
ドン



CHAPTER 30
NOT ADDING UP, NOT TAKING AWAY

THE COLOR TONES WERE DARK, BUT THAT WAS THE TIME WHEN THAT FIERY MAN FIRST STARTED ON HIS JOURNEY WALKING DOWN THAT SOLITARY PATH ..
THE TIME WHEN VAN GOGH WAS IN NUENEN WAS DEFINITELY THE BEST..

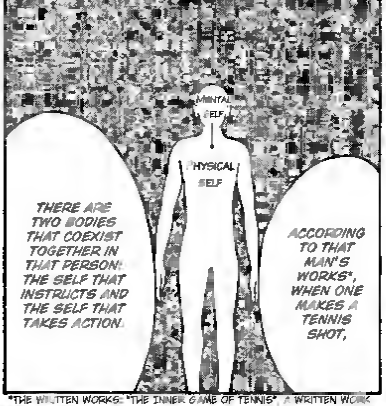

WHEN HE SAYS "DRAWING PICTURES ON THE COURT", DOES HE MEAN DRAWING BY USING THE BALL'S TRAJECTORY?
HE DOES SO MANY WEIRD LOBS .. THEY HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH HOW I RETURN THE BALL

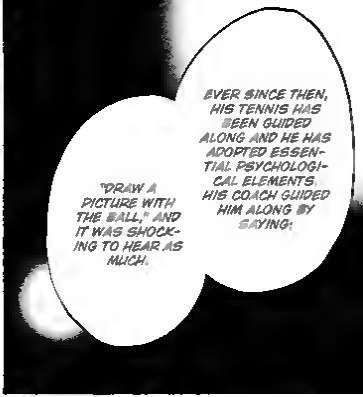
THAT LAST DROP SHOT MADE UP THE HIGH DEGREE OF PERFECTION FOR THAT PICTURE.
IF I CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT HE'S DRAWING, THEN I THINK THERE ARE SOME COUNTERMOVES TO USE AGAINST HIM, BUT...
THERE'S NO WAY FOR ME TO FIND OUT ANYWAY, SO THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.
I'M FEELING GOOD TODAY
I'VE JUST GOT TO FIGHT BACK LIKE I ALWAYS DO.
1-0. IWASA LEADS.

HOW IS THE NEXT SHOT GOING TO COME?!

LWAH
A HIGH SPEED FLAT...
THAT CLOSE TO THE EDGE?!
WHAT KIND OF PRACTICE DO YOU HAVE TO DO TO ACHIEVE BOTH ABILITY AND CONTROL OF THAT CALIBER?!

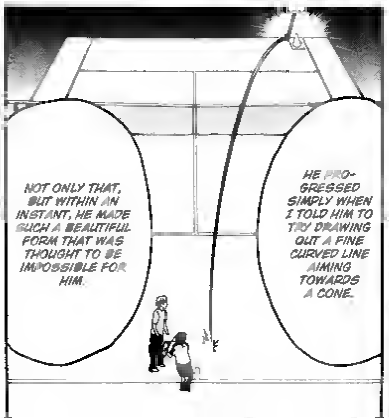
HIS IMPROVEMENT ON HIS SPEED IS ESPECIALLY WHAT WILL LEAVE YOU DUMBFOUNDED
AS IWASA HAS JUST BEGUN DRAWING OUT HIS PICTURE, THAT BALL WAS A CONTINUATION OF HIS SURPRISES.


MENTAL SELF
PHYSICAL SELF
THERE ARE TWO BODIES THAT COEXIST TOGETHER IN THAT PERSON: THE SELF THAT INSTRUCTS AND THE SELF THAT TAKES ACTION.
ACCORDING TO THAT MAN'S WORKS*, WHEN ONE MAKES A TENNIS SHOT,


"DRAW A PICTURE WITH THE BALL," AND IT WAS SHOCKING TO HEAR AS MUCH.
EVER SINCE THEN, HIS TENNIS HAS BEEN GUIDED ALONG AND HE HAS ADOPTED ESSENTIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS HIS COACH GUIDED HIM ALONG BY SAYING:

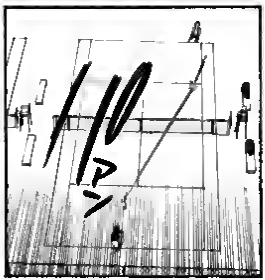
*THE WRITTEN WORKS: "THE INNER GAME OF TENNIS" & WRITTEN WORKS BY W. TIMOTHY GALLWEY, TRANSLATED VIA GOTOU SHINYA TRANSLATIONS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IF ONE WAS TO PHYSICALLY DO SOMETHING LIKE DRAWING HIS OR HER RACKET BACK TOWARDS THE BALL, THEN HIS OR HER PHYSICAL SELF WOULD BE MOST DOMINANT. THE MOMENTS WHEN THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE MENTAL SELF ARE GONE ARE WHEN ONE GIVES HIS OR HER BEST PERFORMANCE
DRAW BACK TOWARDS THE BALL IN A STRAIGHT LINE
QUICKLY PULL BACK YOUR RACKET!
DON'T STRAIN YOURSELF AND RELAX!
WATCH THE BALL CLOSELY!
WHEN ONE'S MENTAL SELF DIRECTS TO DO THINGS SUCH AS "QUICKLY PULL BACK YOUR RACKET" AND SO ON, THEN THAT SELF HOLDS DOMINANCE AND THE PERSON ACTING ON IT DOESN'T PERFORM UP TO HIS OR HER EXPECTATIONS
ONE STARTS THINKING TOO MUCH ABOUT HIS OR HER MOVEMENTS AND GROWS UNABLE TO MOVE AT ALL.


NOT ONLY THAT, BUT WITHIN AN INSTANT, HE MADE SUCH A BEAUTIFUL FORM THAT WAS THOUGHT TO BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM.
HE PROGRESSED SIMPLY WHEN I TOLD HIM TO TRY DRAWING OUT A FINE CURVED LINE AIMING TOWARDS A CONE.

THAT'S HOW IT WAS FOR IWASA
FOR HIS FOREHAND, HE TWISTED HIS HIPS AND BENDED HIS KNEES, ELBOWS AND WRISTS AS I TOLD HIM., BUT EVEN IN DOING SO, HE DIDN'T GET ANY BETTER WHATSOEVER.

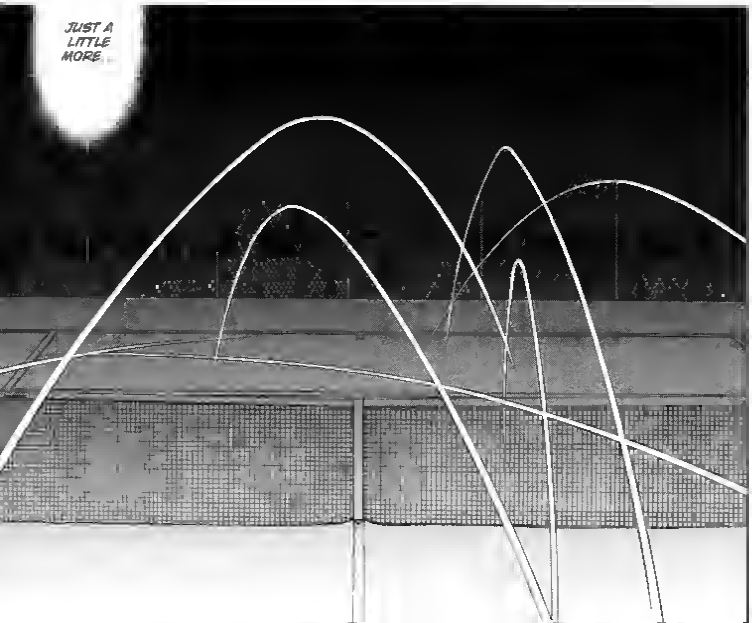
HIS FEELINGS OF WANTING TO DRAW MAKE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE.
ON THAT ISSUE, IWASA ALLOWS HIMSELF THE ABILITY TO PRIORITIZE HIS PHYSICAL SELF'S MOVEMENTS TO FREELY ACT TO THEIR MAXIMUM.
THERE ARE OCCASIONALLY PLAYERS WHO HAVE HIGH ABILITIES FROM THE START BUT ARE SO BOUND DOWN TO THEIR MENTAL INSTRUCTIONS THAT THEIR GROWTH IS SLOW TO COME.
AS SUCH, THERE ISN'T A SINGLE LINE ON THE COURT IN EXISTENCE THAT IWASA CAN'T DRAW OUT.
どひゅ
!!
HUH!



WHY, WHY, WHY?!
WITH MY BALLS GOING ALL OVER PLACE, HOW IS HE ABLE TO MAINTAIN BOTH THE COURSE AND THE SPEED OF EACH ONE SO CALMLY?!

DAMN IT! I WON'T LET YOU HAVE YOUR WAY!

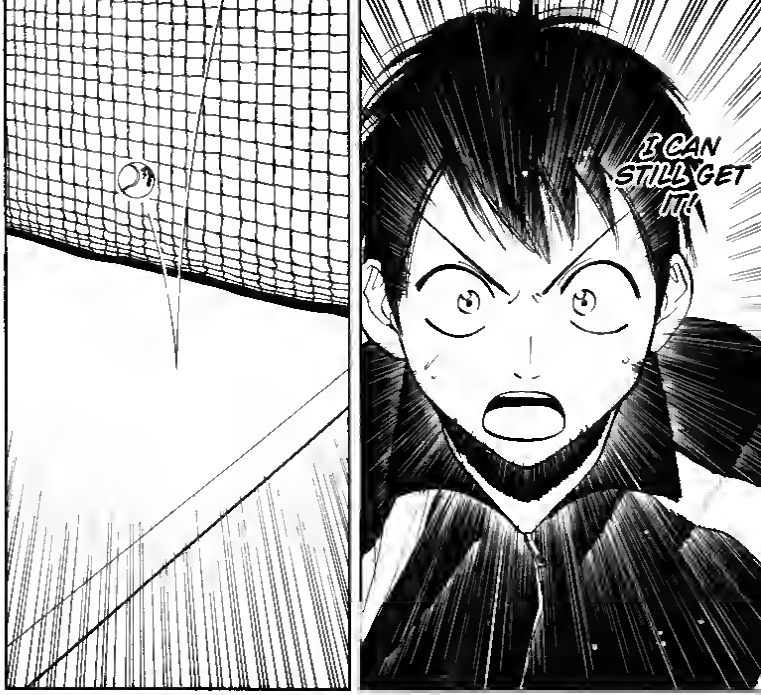
IS IT BECAUSE HE'S DRAWING HIS PICTURE OR WHATEVER?

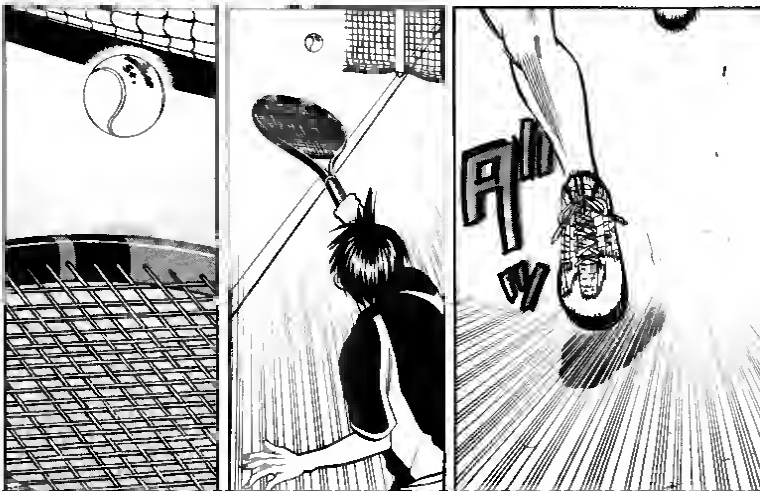

JUST A LITTLE MORE...

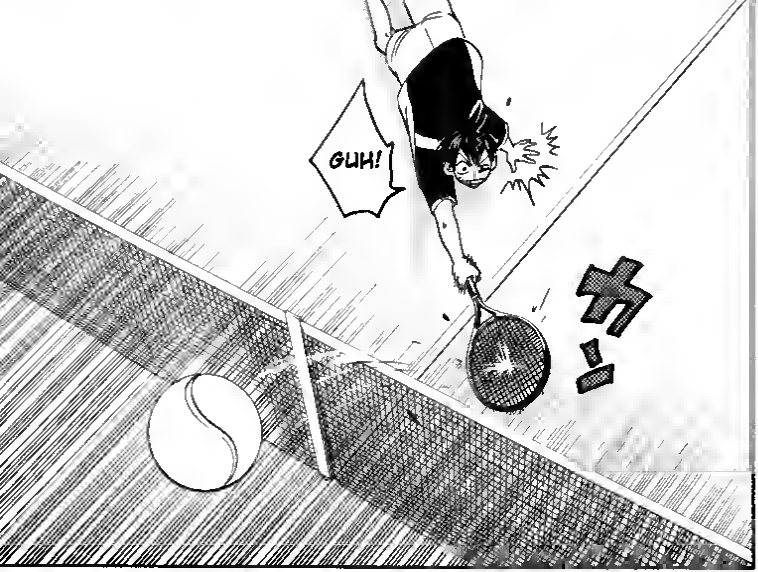
GUH!
AND THIS...
FINISHES IT!
ANOTHER DROP?!

*T/N: AN UKIYO-E WAS A PICTURE MADE WITH COLORED WOODBLOCK PRINTS IN THE EDO PERIOD

FOR YEARS FROM THAT TIME PERIOD UP UNTIL NOW, THOSE PAINTINGS HAVE INFLUENCED THE MORE FAMOUS, GREAT IMPRESSIONISTIC ARTISTS
THE UKIYO-E THAT EVOLVED INTO MANGA AND ANIME AFTER THAT WERE WITHOUT A DOUBT THE STARTING POINTS FOR MODERN CULTURE
IT'S THE UKIYO-E* DRAWN OF THE MUCH OLDER VERSION OF THE TOWN I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN


I CAN STILL GET IT!


AH
IY


GUH!
カン!

AWESOME! HE SENT IT BACK OVER!
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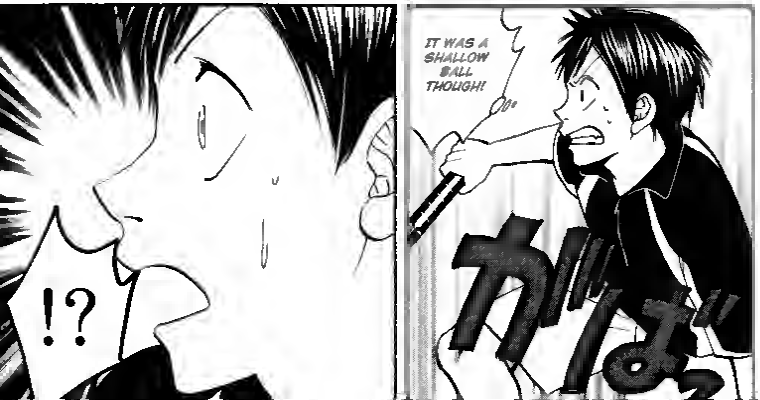
!?
IT WAS A SHALLOW BALL THOUGH!
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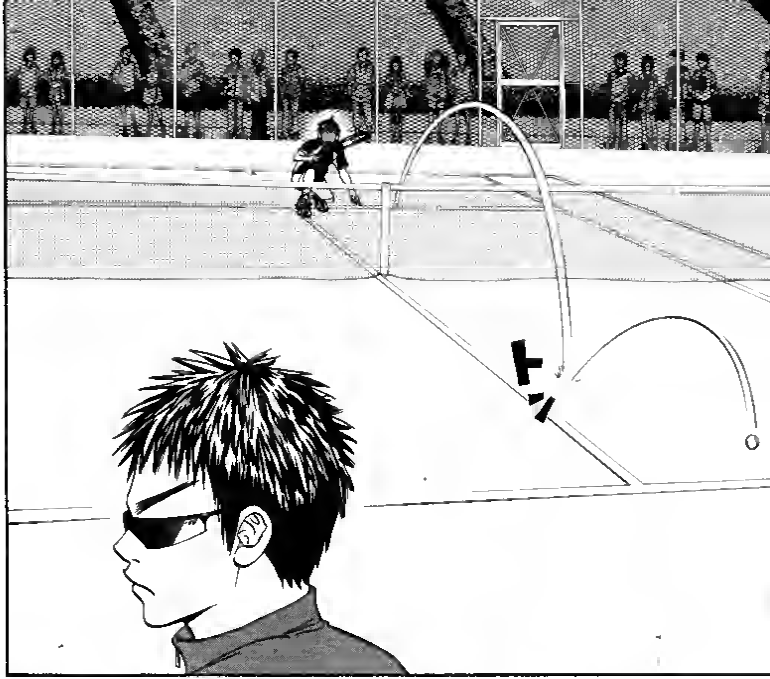
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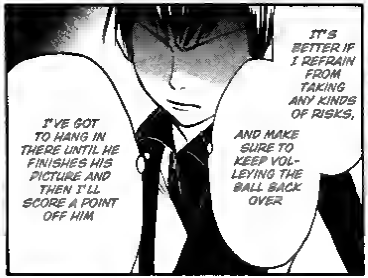
WHA?!
15-30.
HUH?
IWASA JUST GOT SCORED ON, RIGHT?
WHY DIDN'T HE GO AFTER THE BALL?

GO AFTER IT? HE DIDN'T EVEN SEE IT!
DID HE THINK HE WAS GOING TO SCORE OR SOME-THING?
AH.
OR... MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE HE FINISHED HIS PICTURE?!
I WAS TOLD IWASA-KUN WAS WATCHED VERY CLOSELY AS HE GREW UP IN A HOUSE OF ARTISTS
AH HAH, AND THERE SHOWS UP HIS BAD HABIT...
HOW DO YOU, AS HIS MOTHER, SEE IT?

IT'S ONLY THAT I'M A TENNIS COACH AS WELL AND WOULD LIKE FOR HIM TO HAVE A BIT MORE OF AN HONEST DRIVE AND TENACITY TO WIN HIS BATTLES.
NO, NO, NOT AT ALL...
ARE YOU SAYING THERE'S A PROBLEM?
GOING BY THAT, TODAY'S OPPONENT SUITS ME WELL
AND IF IT'S TOO LOW, THEY WON'T KEEP ON PLAYING
IF THE LEVEL OF AN OPPONENT IS TOO HIGH, A PLAYER WILL LOSE CONFIDENCE,
HE SENT THE BALL BACK OVER PRETTY GOOD
107
IT'S TIMES LIKE THESE THAT ALLOW ME TO CHALLENGE MYSELF TO MAKE A PHENOMENAL MASTERPIECE.

SO, I GUESS HE MUST HAVE REALLY FINISHED HIS PICTURE AND THEN STOPPED PLAYING...?
OR DID HE NOT WANT TO MAKE UP ANY MORE LINES FOR THE COMPLETED PICTURE THAN HE DID?
HE'S LAUGHING EVEN THOUGH I SCORED ON HIM!
AH, I FORGOT!
I FEEL LIKE THAT'S THE REASON WHY
IT'S THE SAME THING AS WHEN MY TEACHER SAYS SOMETHING ELSE AND I HAVE TO GO AND ADD IN MORE LINES AFTER I'VE ALREADY FINISHED ALL MY NOTES...
I feel the exact same way
I have to redraw the whole damn picture
Can't add anymore
EVEN THOUGH HE'S GOT SUCH AN AMAZING TECHNIQUE?!
BUT DOES HE EVEN HAVE ANY INTEREST IN THE MATCH ITSELF?
NOT ONLY DOES HE HAVE ZERO INTEREST IN HIS OPPONENT,

...


I'VE GOT TO HANG IN THERE UNTIL HE FINISHES HIS PICTURE AND THEN I'LL SCORE A POINT OFF HIM
IT'S BETTER IF I REFRAIN FROM TAKING ANY KINDS OF RISKS,
AND MAKE SURE TO KEEP VOLLEYING THE BALL BACK OVER

IF THAT'S REALLY THE CASE, THEN I'VE GOT AN IDEA

I WON'T HAVE YOU WIN EVEN ONE MORE GAME OFF ME!

RAW PROVIDER: IMANGASCANS
TRANSLATOR: TEISHOU
PROOFREADER: GEORGI
CLEANER: DEATHY80
TYPESETTER: KAJII
Q-CER: LORDLESTAT

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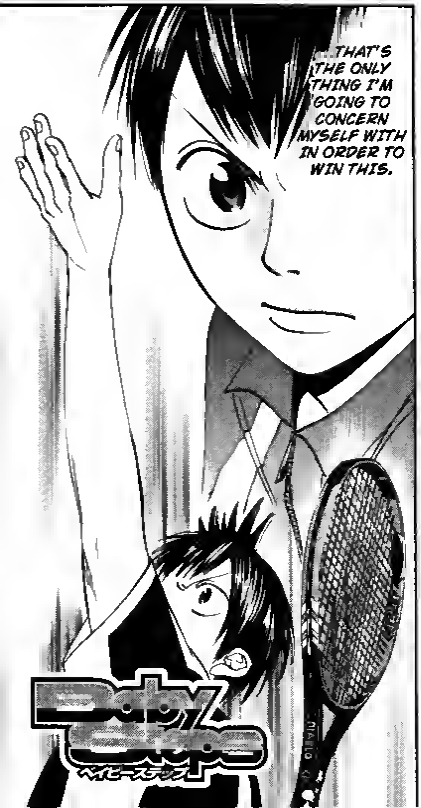
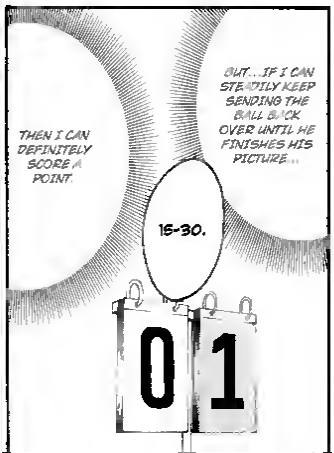
THE THING THAT STORE ATTENDANT WAS TALKING ABOUT.
HE TOLD ME HE'S HAPPIEST WHEN HE DRAWS A GOOD PICTURE ON THE COURT.
HE'S AN INTER-ESTING KID.
THE UNORTHODOX STYLE HE USED, THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
BUT THAT'S NOT EXACTLY A VERY GOOD WAY TO ATTACK!
AND NOW HE STOPS GOING FOR THE BALL OUT OF NOWHERE...
HUH?
15-30.
WHA?!


...THAT'S THE ONLY THING I'M GOING TO CONCERN MYSELF WITH IN ORDER TO WIN THIS.
Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ

SO IS THIS A STYLE WHERE YOU DRAW PICTURES ON THE COURT?
HE'S IGNORING THE OUTCOME OF THE GAME? THEN HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT HE'S GOTTEN SO STRONG?


BUT...IF I CAN STEADILY KEEP SENDING THE BALL BACK OVER UNTIL HE FINISHES HIS PICTURE...
THEN I CAN DEFINITELY SCORE A POINT.
15-30.
0
1

I WON'T HAVE YOU WIN EVEN ONE MORE GAME OFF ME!
#31: LATENT ENERGY
A DEEP CROSS!
HAH!

IF I ONLY CONCENTRATE ON HITTING THE BALL BACK, THERE'S NO BALL I CAN'T HIT.
HAH!
I'VE DEALT WITH HARSH TENNIS LIKE THIS BEFORE!
TOWARDS THE FRONT!

IT'S DEEP... THIS ONE WILL BE RISKY.
HUH!
AMAZING! THIS GIVES OFF A MUCH BETTER FEELING THAN BEFORE!
COOL THAT'S EI-CHAN FOR YOU!
HEY YOU

I HAVE TO HURRY BACK TO COVER THE COURT WHEN I HIT THE BALL!
GOT TO HAVE STRONG CONTROL WHERE I CAN!
IT'S TAKING A LONG TIME TO GET THIS POINT.
DID MARUO START FEELING BAD AGAIN?
THE WAY THIS IS GOING, IWASA'S GOING TO HAVE TROUBLE WINNING, TOO.

IWASA MISSED IT AGAIN?!
WHAT?!
WHAT THE HELL'S HE THINKING?!
SO NOT COOL
!!
30-30.
"THE BLOOMING PLUMTREE" WAS AN OIL PAINTING BY VAN GOGH DID THAT WAS INFLUENCED BY THE UKIYO-E PAINT
THE ONE I TRIED TO COPY WAS BASED ON THE ONES I KNEW FROM PREVIOUS ARTISTS THAT IMITATED HIS WORK.
IS HE REALLY GOING TO KEEP DOING THAT THE WHOOOOOLE TIME?
YOU'RE RIGHT, IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME.
I KNEW IT!
IF I CAN KEEP IT GOING BACK AND FORTH ALL THE WAY, THEN I'LL SCORE A POINT!

WHEN HE FINISHED DRAWING HIS PICTURE, IWASA WOULDN'T CHASE AFTER THE BALL, AS IT WASN'T EVEN SEEN BY HIM.
THIS DEVELOPMENT WAS CERTAINLY THE RESULT OF EIICHIROU POLISHING HIS SKILLS WITH COVERING THE COURT THOROUGHLY FOR AN ENTIRE YEAR.
HOWEVER, EVEN AS HE CONTINUED SCORING, THERE WAS NO SIGN OF IWASA'S STYLE CHANGING AS HE WAS SO ABSORBED IN HIS DRAWING HIS PICTURE ON THE COURT
AS FOR THE RESULTS FOR THE MATCH, EIICHIROU DIDN'T HAVE A STRATEGY TO SPEAK OF, BUT ONLY KEPT AT RACKING UP HIS POINTS
1-3, GAME, MARUO.
15-30.
BY THE TIME GAME 4 CAME ALONG 40 MINUTES OF PLAYTIME HAD ALREADY PASSED
40-15.
THE MATCH SHOWED ASPECTS OF TURNING INTO A RECORD-BREAKING MARATHON.
0-15, LOVE.

GAME, MARUO. MARUO LEADS 4-2.
AH!
AH, NOT AGAIN
10

BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN AN OPPONENT KEEP UP WITH HIM THIS MUCH BEFORE. SO HE'S PROBABLY ABLE TO DRAW A LOT OF GOOD PICTURES RIGHT NOW.
HE'S CONCENTRATING AND HAVING MORE FUN THAN EVER
WHEN I SEE HIM LIKE THIS
....

IT'S AS IF IT'S NOT A COURT, BUT THAT HE'S BEEN GIVEN A WHITE CANVAS TO DRAW ALL OVER.

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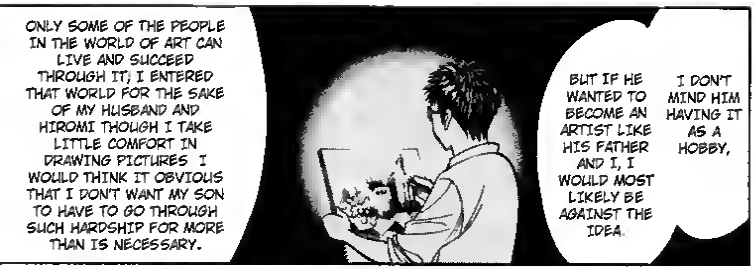
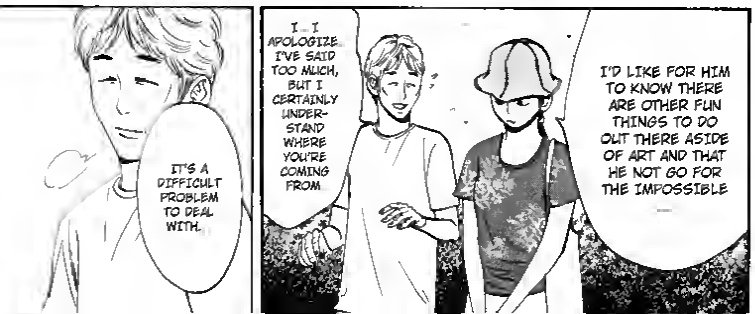
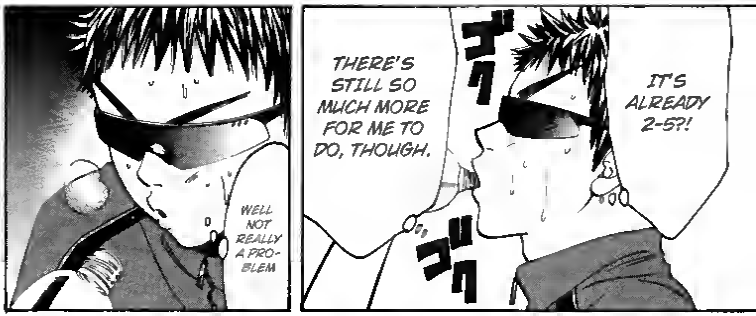
I'M AWARE OF HIS DESIRE TO DRAW.
I KNOW OF THE SKETCHBOOK HE WOULD QUIETLY DRAW IN.
...


ONLY SOME OF THE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD OF ART CAN LIVE AND SUCCEED THROUGH IT; I ENTERED THAT WORLD FOR THE SAKE OF MY HUSBAND AND HIROMI THOUGH I TAKE LITTLE COMFORT IN DRAWING PICTURES I WOULD THINK IT OBVIOUS THAT I DON'T WANT MY SON TO HAVE TO GO THROUGH SUCH HARDSHIP FOR MORE THAN IS NECESSARY.
BUT IF HE WANTED TO BECOME AN ARTIST LIKE HIS FATHER AND I, I WOULD MOST LIKELY BE AGAINST THE IDEA.
I DON'T MIND HIM HAVING IT AS A HOBBY,

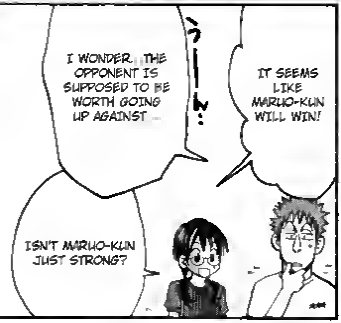

IT'S A DIFFICULT PROBLEM TO DEAL WITH.
I... I APOLOGIZE. I'VE SAID TOO MUCH, BUT I CERTAINLY UNDERSTAND WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM.
I'D LIKE FOR HIM TO KNOW THERE ARE OTHER FUN THINGS TO DO OUT THERE ASIDE OF ART AND THAT HE NOT GO FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

5 2
GAME, MARUO. MARUO LEADS 5-2.


WELL NOT REALLY A PRO-BLEM
THERE'S STILL SO MUCH MORE FOR ME TO DO, THOUGH.
IT'S ALREADY 2-5?!

I'LL JUST MAKE SURE I DON'T LOSE.

ONE MORE GAME AND I WIN?!


I WONDER... THE OPPONENT IS SUPPOSED TO BE WORTH GOING UP AGAINST...
うーん...
IT SEEMS LIKE MARUO-KUN WILL WIN!
ISN'T MARUO-KUN JUST STRONG?

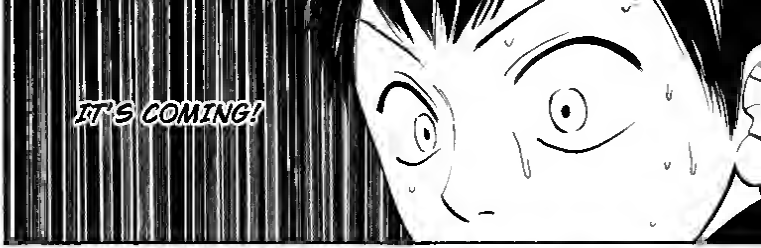
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE WINNING LIKE THIS.
SOMEONE LIKE HIM SHOULDN'T BE A 3RD SEED AND RANKED HIGHER THAN MIYAGAWA-KUN

AH... YOUR MATCH FINISHED UP, YUKICHI-KUN?
HOW'D IT GO?
I LOST
PRETTY EASILY TOO
YOU SURPRISED ME.
I'VE BEEN HERE THE ENTIRE TIME
AND BY THE WAY

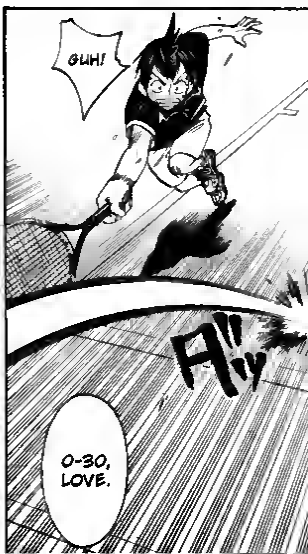
HE IS A STRONG OPPONENT.
BUT RATHER THAN THE FEELING OF HIM LOOKING STRONG,
IWASH'S A REALLY STRONG OPPONENT OR SOMETHING.

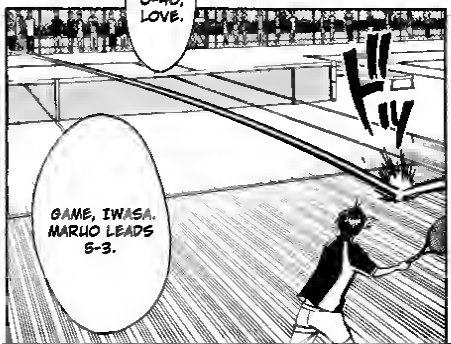
IWASA'S STRENGTH COMES FROM HIS OVER-WHELMING TECHNIQUE.
HE CAN HIT ANY KIND OF BALL AT ANY SPEED TO ANYWHERE. HIS TECHNIQUE FOR MANIPULATING THE BALL STANDS OUT FROM THE ENTIRE PREFECTURE.
I'VE GONE UP AGAINST HIM, AND IT'S A WONDER WHY HE'S A 3RD SEED
YOU FOR REAL?
HA
HERE WE GO!

0-15,
LOVE.


IT'S COMING!

I'VE GOT TO DRAW AND NOT HAVE A POINT SCORED ON ME
I'LL JUST HAVE TO BE A LITTLE MORE SERIOUS


GUH!
0-30, LOVE.


0-40, LOVE.
GAME, IWASA. MARUO LEADS 5-3.

KEEP SENDING THEM BACK TO ME UNTIL THE VERY END!
H-HOLD ON A SEC-OND...
HAH!
THAT'S THE WAY
THERE IS NO WAY
GUH!

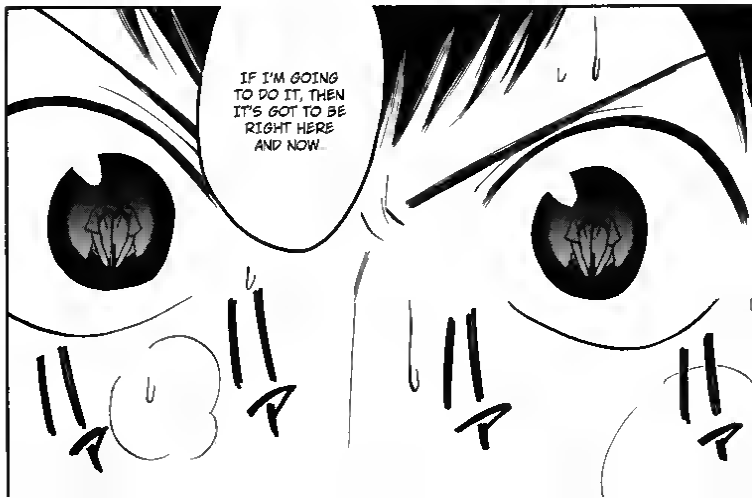
HAH!
FWY
GAME, IWASA! MARUO LEADS 5-4.

ALL RIGHT, IT'S COMPLETED...
THE FABULOUS PIECE I'VE ATTEMPTED TO DRAW ON MY GROUND CANVAS MONET'S "WATER LILLIES".
I HAVEN'T HAD AN OPPONENT THAT RETURNS THE BALL LONG ENOUGH FOR THE NEAR-ABSTRACT "WATER LILLIES" PAINTING TO COME INTO FORM THE WAY IT HAS TODAY
AMAZING, IT'S ALREADY 5-4
しぃん
I'VE COME HERE AND SHOWN OFF ALL THAT I'M ABLE TO DO
UN-BELIEV-ABLE. WAY MORE THAN I EXPECTED
I SHOULD'VE KNOWN THERE WAS NO WAY I'D WIN THAT EASILY
ハァ
ハァ
ハァ
ハァ

IT'S JUST LIKE WITH MIYAGAWA-KUN... I CAN'T WIN BY ONLY COVERING THE COURT AND USING CONTROL!

I DON'T REALLY GET HIM AT ALL, BUT HE'S DEFINITELY STRONG - WITHOUT A DOUBT!

SHE'S RIGHT - IF HE SERVES AND HOLDS HIS OWN IN THIS GAME, ANIKI'S MORE LIKELY TO WIN
BUT HE DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH POINTS TO WIN YET.
MAN, HE REALLY IS STRONG...


IF I'M GOING TO DO IT, THEN IT'S GOT TO BE RIGHT HERE AND NOW.

扉ポツ後
なんかカッコつけすぎた。
たぶん姫乃にはこう見えている。

Baby Steps

RAW PROVIDER: IMANGASCANS
TRANSLATOR: TEISHOU
PROOFREADER: GEORGI
CLEANER: DEATHY80
TYPESETTER: KAJII
Q-CER: LORDLESTAT

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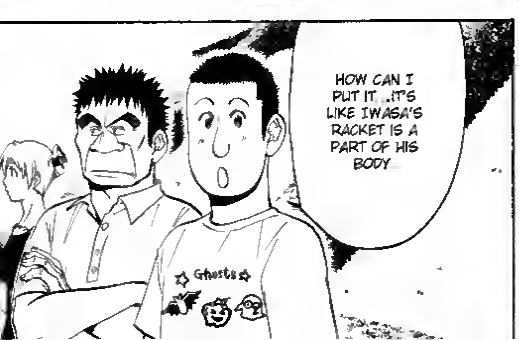
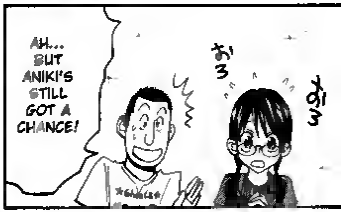
#32: A PIECE OF A SMILE



IN TENNIS, YOU NORMALLY SEND A BALL BACK IN THE SAME GENERAL DIRECTION AND AT ABOUT THE SAME SPEED; THIS IS CONSIDERED TO BE THE EASIEST TENNIS.
EASY
CHANGING THAT UP IS HARD BUT,
DIFFICULT
WITH IWASA, HE TAKES ANY KIND OF BALL AND CHANGES THE COURSE AND SPEED OF IT INTO SOMETHING MORE DIFFICULT.
THE RHYTHM HE USES IS TIRING ON THE OPPONENT AND HARD TO WORK WITH.

I SAW HIS MATCH AGAINST TERASHIMA AND HE HASN'T SHOWN THAT EXPLOSION OF POWER HERE YET.
ANIKI HAS BEEN MATCHING UP TO IWASA'S TENNIS.


AH... BUT ANIKI'S STILL GOT A CHANCE!
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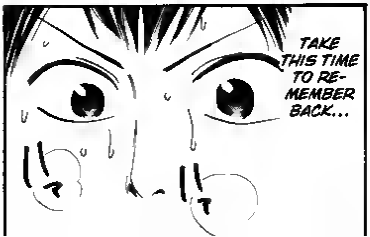
I'VE GOT TO CHANGE THE FLOW...
HE'S GOING TO BEAT ME WITH THE KIND OF TENNIS WE'VE BEEN PLAYING


TAKE THIS TIME TO REMEMBER BACK...

THIS MUST BE THE REAL IWASA-KUN...
HIS TEMPO'S FAST...AND HIS AIM IS REALLY RUTHLESS...

Back to the game against Terashima-kun where I was at my best,
The score was 4-1. It was hot but I could sometimes feel the wind running across my skin. It wasn't all that loud but I could hear the sounds of murmurs all around me.
My body and racket felt lighter than normal...and I could clearly see the ball.
I kept muttering to myself, "Have I really gotten this strong?"
DUNLOP
S1.
TIME!

HAH!
ALL RIGHT, COME DO YOUR WORST!
THIS IS IT!
EI-CHAN'S MOVING UP THE COURT!

HAH!
!!

UGH!
YOU'VE GOT TO BE THE ONE TO BEAT THEM DOWN IN ONE STROKE!
THERE'S A THIN LINE BETWEEN HAVING A CHANCE AND BEING IN TROUBLE!
THAT'S RIGHT GOT TO DO MORE
YOU'RE TOO GENTLE!
HIS STYLE CHANGED...
LOVE-15.
DAMN, HOW ANNOYING...
TH-THAT ONE WAS REALLY CLOSE TOO!
WHOA, AWESOME!

HAH!
HAH!
I'VE GOT AN IDEA OF WHERE TO ATTACK AND TAKE CONTROL OF THIS GAME!
ABOUT NOW'S GOOD.
I CAN DO IT...ONE MORE TIME!
I'LL ATTACK, BREAK HIM DOWN, AND POUND IN THE FINAL BLOW!
NGHA!

IN THE BATTLES AGAINST MIYAGAWA AND TERASHIMA, HE GAINED CONFIDENCE. MIKE'S PSYCHOLOGY CULTIVATED A STRENGTH OF MIND FOR HIM.
SERVES, CONTROL, AND VOLLEYS ALL DEAL WITH THE TECHNIQUE, BUT EXPLOSIVE POWER, PERSEVERANCE, ONE'S EYES SHOWING A STRONG SENSE OF PURPOSE ARE ALL ABOUT THE PHYSICAL ABILITY.
STEP-BY-STEP, MARUO-KUN HAS BROUGHT ALL THE PIECES OF THE PUZZLE - MIND, BODY, AND TECHNIQUE - TOGETHER TO COMPLETE THE PICTURE.
TRULY... ANIKI'S GOTTEN STRONG ALL AT ONCE LATELY.
OH WOW, EI-CHAN REALLY HAS GOTTEN STRONG!
THIS IS WHERE IT GETS GOOD.
AND NOW'S WHEN HE'S ACTUALLY COMBINING THEM ALL.
WHEN YOU PUT TOGETHER ONE PART OF THE PUZZLE, YOU'RE ABLE TO SEE THE SURROUNDING PART OF IT AND YOU FIND OUT HOW TO USE THE PIECES YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT BEFORE.
AND YOU MOVE FASTER TOWARDS COMPLETING THE FINAL PICTURE
THAT WAS CERTAINLY WHAT HAPPENED IN HIS DRAMATICALLY OVERWHELMING WIN OVER TERASHIMA.

HE'S SUDDENLY ABLE TO EMPLOY ALL THE RESULTS THAT HAVE BEEN STEADILY PILING UP!
HUN!
HAH!
A STRAIGHT CROSS, REVERSE CROSS, A LOW-ANGLE SHOT, A DROP
USE THEM ALL!
NO THEORIES, AND DON'T GET CAUGHT UP IN USING THE SAME PATTERN AS USUAL!

DON'T ATTACK WILDLY BUT DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE
FIGHT WHILE HOLDING MY GROUND IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO ATTACK WHEN THE TIME COMES
IWASA-KUN HAS A TECHNIQUE WHERE HE CAN HIT ANYWHERE,
WOW!
LIMIT THE COURSE OF HIS ATTACK WHEN RETURNING THE BALL!
RUN!

GREAT! THERE'S SO MUCH DISTANCE, HE CAN'T HIT BACK WITH TWO HANDS!
HE'LL SLICE WITH A STRAIGHT OR A LOB!
HUH?!
He hit a cross with one hand?
WHERE'S THE BALL GOING TO GO?!
WILL HE AIM STRAIGHT AHEAD?! TO THE SIDE?!
NOT GOOD!

A LOB?!

HE REACTED QUICKLY! DOES HE HAVE GOOD EYES OR SOMETHING?

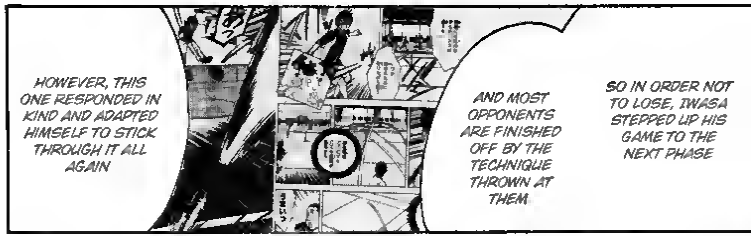
REACH UP AND GET IT!
ALL I CAN DO IS JUMP UP FOR IT!
AND IF I'M GOING TO JUMP UP

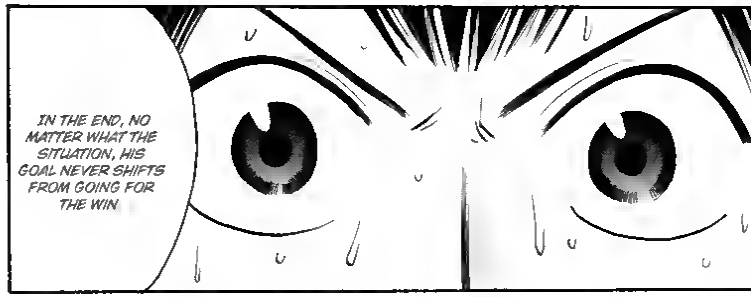
I'LL SCORE
WITH ONE HIT!

15 ALL.
NGAH!
I SCORED WITH MY OWN STRENGTH!
I DID IT!
I CAN WIN THIS!

THIS IS THE WORST KIND OF OPPONENT FOR IWASA...

BUT THIS OPPONENT HAS STUCK THROUGH IT ALL AND SURVIVED PAST THAT STAGE
AND THE STRANGE TEMPO WOULD TAKE CAPTIVE OVER THE OPPONENT AND BREAK DOWN HIS MENTALITY
NORMALLY, THE FIRST PHASE FOR HIM WOULD BE TO FREELY DRAW AS HE LIKED,


HOWEVER, THIS ONE RESPONDED IN KIND AND ADAPTED HIMSELF TO STICK THROUGH IT ALL AGAIN
AND MOST OPPONENTS ARE FINISHED OFF BY THE TECHNIQUE THROWN AT THEM
SO IN ORDER NOT TO LOSE, IWASA STEPPED UP HIS GAME TO THE NEXT PHASE


IN THE END, NO MATTER WHAT THE SITUATION, HIS GOAL NEVER SHIFTS FROM GOING FOR THE WIN

YOU RARELY SEE BAD CHEMISTRY OF THIS TYPE
THE TIME FOR THE 5-4, IS ALL MATCH ELAPSED PAST 120 MINUTES.
THE STUPENDOUS GROWTH OF THIS NON-SEEDER WAS NOT SOMETHING OF A MIRACLE.
THIS IS SOMETHING THAT EVERY PERSON WATCHING WAS STARTING TO BELIEVE.

THE MATCH ENDING BEFORE I FINISH MY PICTURE IS IMPOSSIBLE.
ONLY ONE PERSON RULED THAT OUT...
I WON'T FORGIVE YOU FOR GETTING IN MY WAY..

I WON'T LET YOU GET IN MY WAY.
I WILL MAKE YOU FINISH THE PICTURE I'VE BEGUN DRAWING IN ITS ENTIRETY, WITHOUT A DOUBT.
15-ALL.
45
ANIKI'S TAKEN CONTROL OF THE FLOW NOW!
AWESOME, EI-CHAN'S FIGHTING ON PAR WITH A 3RD SEED!

#33: AN EMERGENT SITUATION

CRAP! HE'S AT THE FRONT OF THE COURT?!

A LOB... VIA A VOLLEY?

15-30.
AH, SO CLOSE!
BUT... WHY GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO SCORE WITH A DIFFICULT SHOT?
ドン
ドン
GUH!
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME HE'S GONE INTO SERIOUS MODE IN THIS TOURNAMENT.
THERE'S NO STOPPING HIM AT THIS POINT.
DAMN IT...
I REALLY CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO!

...GUH!
SHEW!
KUH
DAMN!

GAH!
OH MAN! HE SENT IT BACK SOME-HOW!
HE'S SMILING ...?

JUST A LITTLE MORE...

BUT WHY?!
BECAUSE HE'S DRAWING HIS PICTURE?!

KUH!
THOSE THREE POINTS SEEM SO FAR AWAY...

110
9" 9"

HAH
HE'S BEEN UPPING HIS GAME BIT BY BIT
IS THERE ANOTHER LEVEL BEYOND THIS?!

I'M HITTING THE BALL BACK THE BEST I CAN...
BUT OUR LEVELS ARE TOO DIFFERENT!
...THIS IS THE SAME AS THE GAME I LOST AGAINST OOYABASHI ONE YEAR AGO!

HUN!
!?

ピク
UH...
ピク
!?
!!
HIRO-MI?! WHAT'S WRONG?!
AGAIN?
YEAH...HE LET IT GO BY AGAIN.
NO. THIS TIME'S DIFFERENT.
IT'S NOT THE SAME AS WHEN HE USUALLY LETS IT GO BY...

LOOKS LIKE HE GOT A CRAMP...
IT'S BEEN 2 HOURS AND 10 MINUTES .THAT'S UNUSUALLY LONG FOR A ONE-SET MATCH
BUT IN TODAY'S MATCH, IWASA-KUN PUSHED HIMSELF MORE THAN NECESSARY AND OVERRAN HIS LIMITS AGAINST THE TENACIOUS MARUO-KUN
AND HE KEPT DASHING AND STOPPING IN THIS IMMENSE HEAT

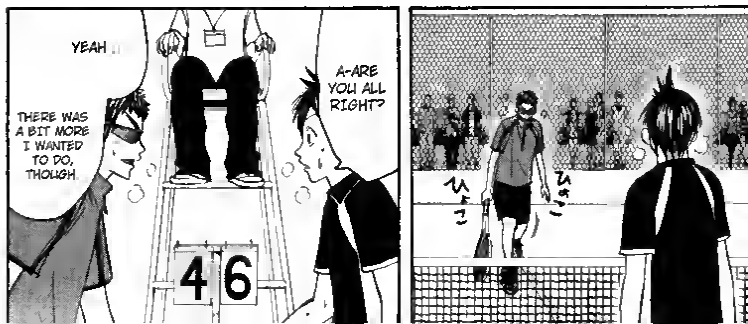
I-IWASA-KUN...
ARE YOU OKAY?
FOR ONCE, HE GOT REALLY SERIOUS IN THE MATCH AND THE TENSION BUILT UP TOO MUCH, BUT HE HADN'T NOTICED HIS BODY SCREAMING OUT AT HIM.
WE WILL RESUME THE MATCH
30-ALL.
...

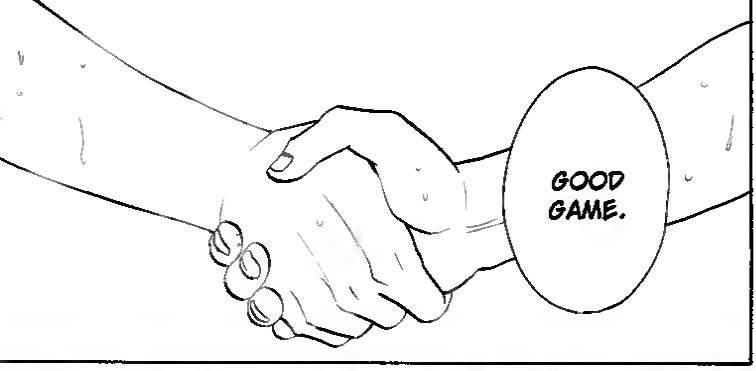
HAH!
40-30.

GAME, SET.
WON BY MARUO. COUNT, 6-4.
...
HMM...
I-IT'S OVER..
WELL, THIS ONE WAS A BATTLE, TOO.
I'M KINDA DISAPPOINTED BY HOW IT ENDED..

BUT EI-CHAN SURE IS A COM-PLICATED ONE.
NO JOKE... STC IS THE TOP IN THE COUNTRY WITH HOW MUCH PRACTICE WE PUT IN...
TENNIS IS A GAME OF MIND, BODY, AND TECHNIQUE. THE ONE WHO TRI-UMPHED HERE WAS MARUO, WHO WENT AN ENTIRE YEAR AND A HALF WITHOUT MISSING A DAY OF PRACTICE.

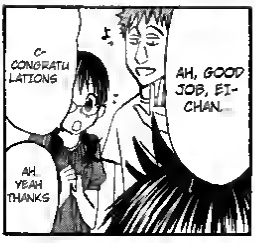
I WON... I GUESS I'M DOING OKAY THEN...


YEAH...
A-ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
THERE WAS A BIT MORE I WANTED TO DO, THOUGH.
46


GOOD GAME.

U-UM, IWASA-KUN...

...

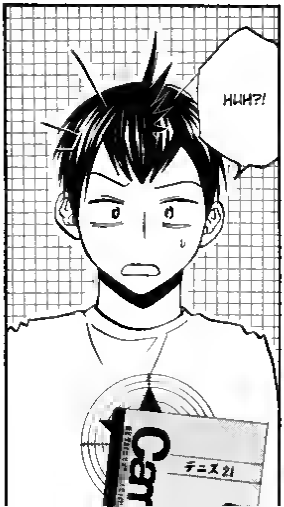

C-CONGRATULATIONS
AH, YEAH THANKS
AH, GOOD JOB, EI-CHAN...

WHAT?
UM... I HAVE A QUESTION TO ASK IF YOU DON'T MIND.

AH, WELL, THERE'S JUST ONE MORE THING I'D LIKE TO KNOW...
I'M SORRY IT'S REALLY BEEN BUGGING ME.
WELL, I USE THE BALL TO DRAW IN THE AIR OR DRAW ON THE COURT OR IN SOME OTHER WAYS...
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO KNOWING THAT?
U-UM... WERE YOU REALLY DRAWING A PICTURE DURING THE MATCH?
OH, SO YOU KNEW ABOUT IT?
OH, NO, IT'S JUST... I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING OTHER THAN IT BEING AMAZING.

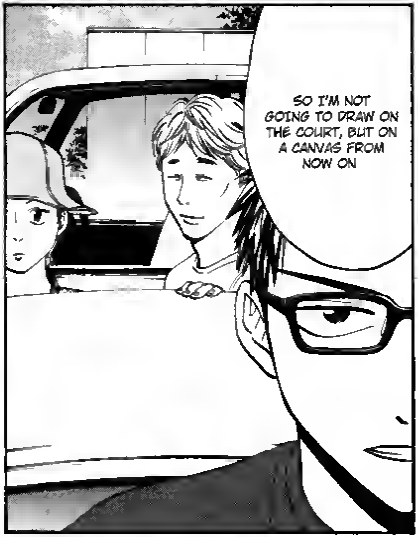
I DIDN'T GET THE FEELING THAT IT REALLY ENDED TODAY
UM, PLEASE FIGHT AGAINST ME IN A MATCH AGAIN SOMEDAY

I SEE, SO THAT KIND OF PRACTICE EXISTS OUT THERE, TOO. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
THIS IS THE FEELING I BASICALLY GOT FROM IT...


HUH?!
DON'T THINK I CAN WIN AGAINST YOU ANYMORE.
UM... BUT I

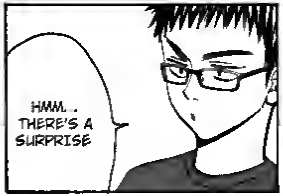
I ONLY TRAIN MY BODY BECAUSE I HAVE TO, AND YOU SAW HOW THAT WENT.
!?
IN THE END, I PLAY TENNIS ONLY SO I CAN DRAW PICTURES.
WELL, I SAW IT CLEARLY IN TODAY'S MATCH.

RATHER, THE TIME I PLAY TENNIS WILL BE LESSENED TO SAY THE LEAST.
WHAT?! YOU'RE QUITTING TENNIS?!


SO I'M NOT GOING TO DRAW ON THE COURT, BUT ON A CANVAS FROM NOW ON

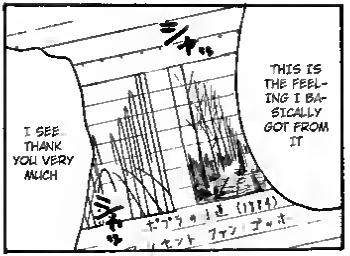
HUH? AH, S-SURE, GO AHEAD
SO, YOU MIND IF I ASK YOU SOMETHING THIS TIME?

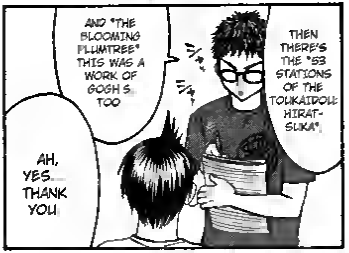
.....



CONTINUED IN VOLUME 5.

BAD HABITS




AND "THE BLOOMING PLUMTREE" THIS WAS A WORK OF GOSHO TOO
THEN THERE'S THE "53 STATIONS OF THE TOKAIDO" HIRATSUKA".
AH, YES. THANK YOU.

AND TURN THE "LACE MAKER" BY VERMEER.
AND CANALETTO'S GRAND CANAL NEAR THE CAMPO SAN VIO, LOOKING TOWARDS THE CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA DELLA SALUTE

HELLO THERE, KACHIKI HERE.

VOLUME 4 WAS A FAST ONE, TOO.

NOW THAT I'VE READ BACK THROUGH, IT WAS ABOUT NOTHING BUT MATCHES. BUT THE FINAL MATCH IN 2008 WIMBLEDON MEN'S DIVISION BETWEEN FEDERER AND NADAL WAS REALLY AMAZING. I THOUGHT I'D TRY TO MAKE UP A MATCH AS AMAZING AS THAT IN THE MANGA. BUT FOR THAT TO HAPPEN, EI-CHAN'S GOING TO HAVE TO GET A WHOLE LOT STRONGER!

WELL THEN, SEE YOU IN THE NEXT VOLUME!

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

勝木 光

4

Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

KCM4027

KC

Baby Steps ベイビーステップ 4

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